

KARINA

# Sleeping Beauty

ACT I



euRoPe  
COMICS

KARINA

# Sleeping Beauty

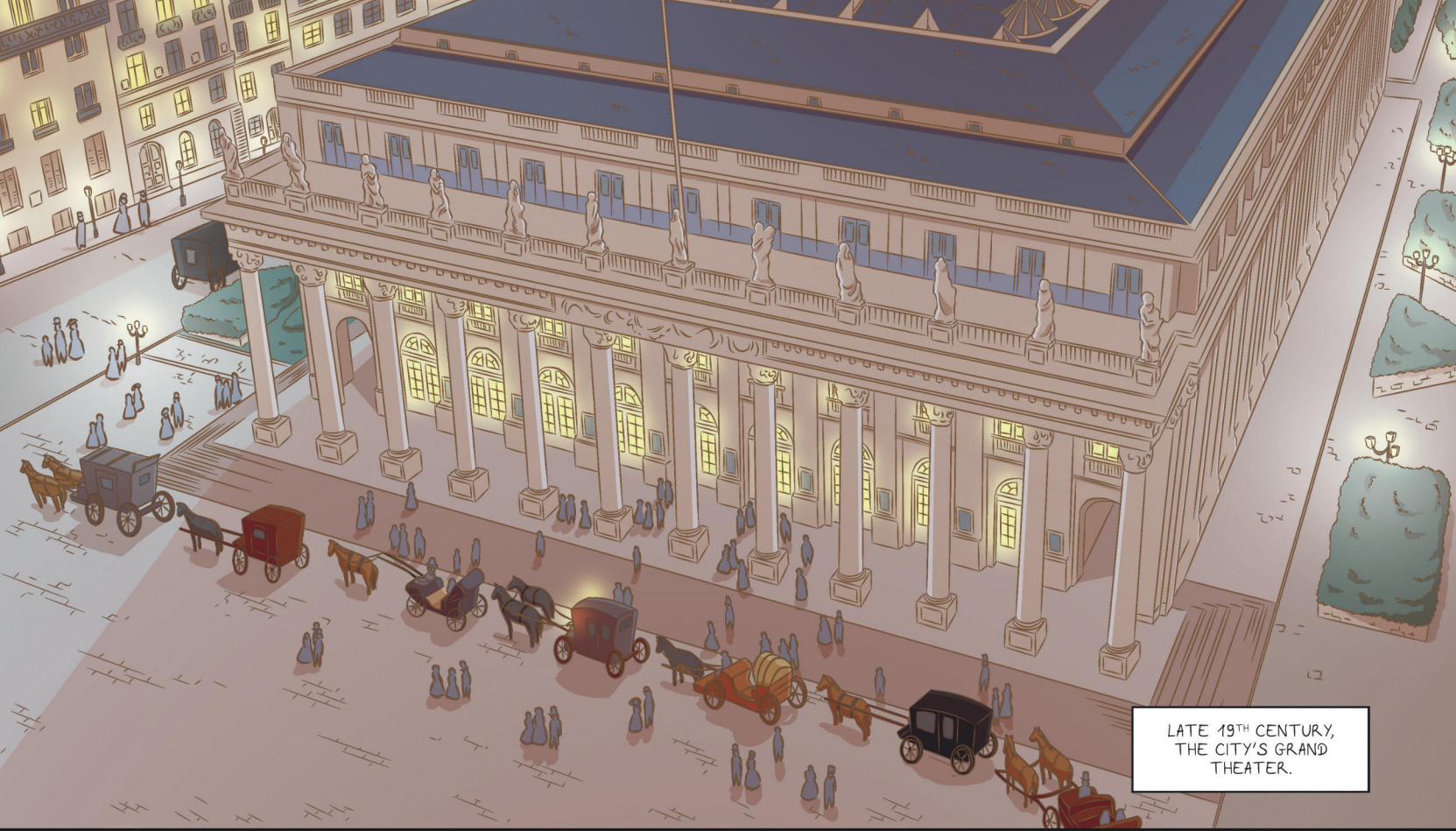


ACT I





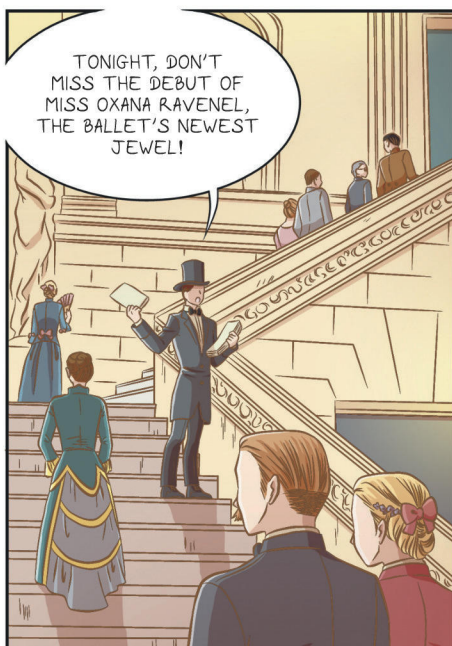




LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY,  
THE CITY'S GRAND  
THEATER.



NO ONE COULD HAVE ANTICIPATED THE  
TERRIBLE TURN OF EVENTS THAT WAS ABOUT  
TO TRANSPIRE AT THE PREMIERE OF THE  
*SLEEPING BEAUTY* BALLET.

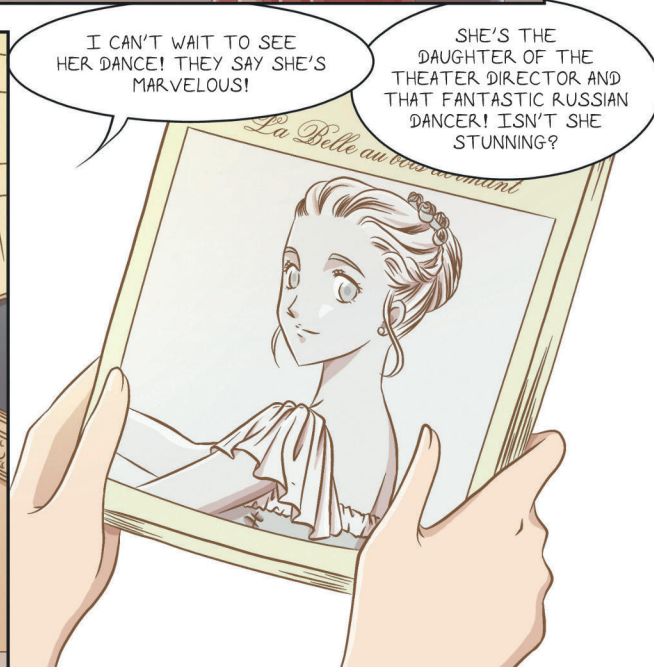


TONIGHT, DON'T  
MISS THE DEBUT OF  
MISS OXANA RAVENEL,  
THE BALLET'S NEWEST  
JEWEL!



A PROGRAM FOR  
THE LADY!

THANK YOU,  
SIR!



I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE  
HER DANCE! THEY SAY SHE'S  
MARVELOUS!

SHE'S THE  
DAUGHTER OF THE  
THEATER DIRECTOR AND  
THAT FANTASTIC RUSSIAN  
DANCER! ISN'T SHE  
STUNNING?





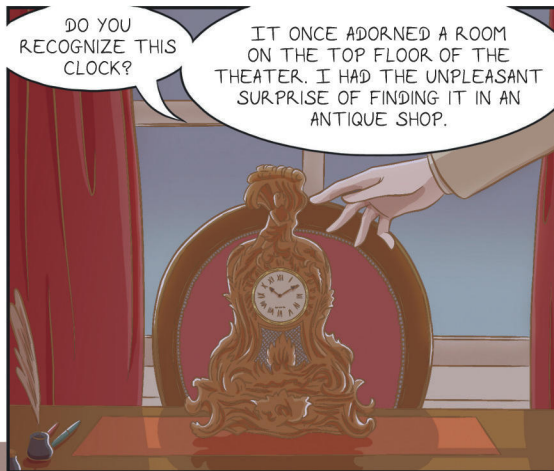
YOU WANTED  
TO SEE ME,  
MR. RAVENEL?



INDEED, MY  
GOOD MAN! LET'S GO  
TO MY OFFICE!

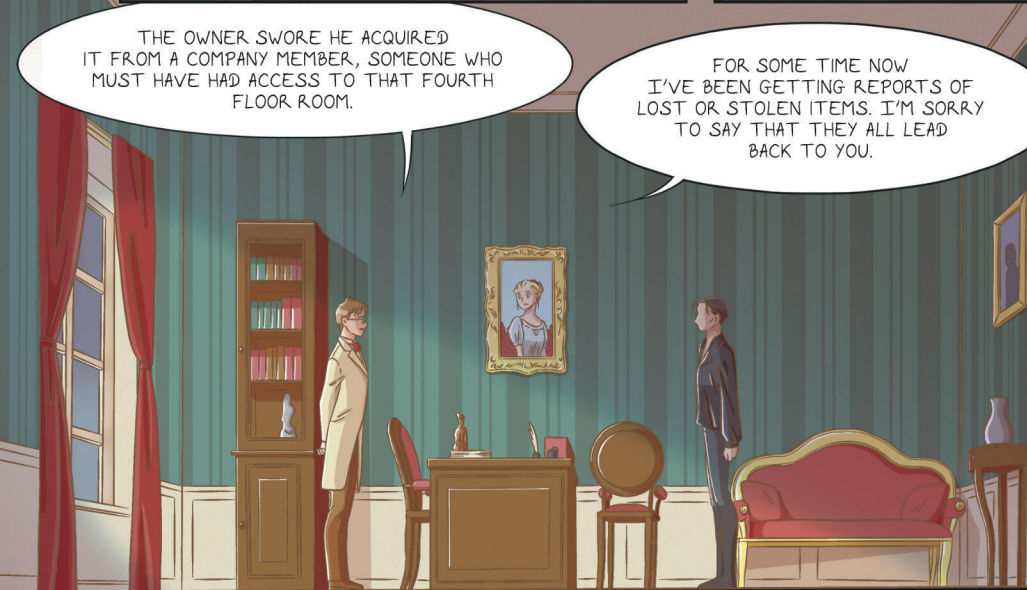
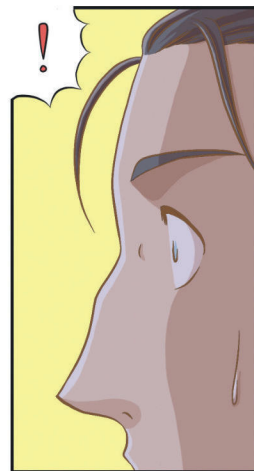


THE CURTAIN  
GOES UP IN A FEW  
MINUTES SO I'LL BE  
BRIEF. TELL ME...



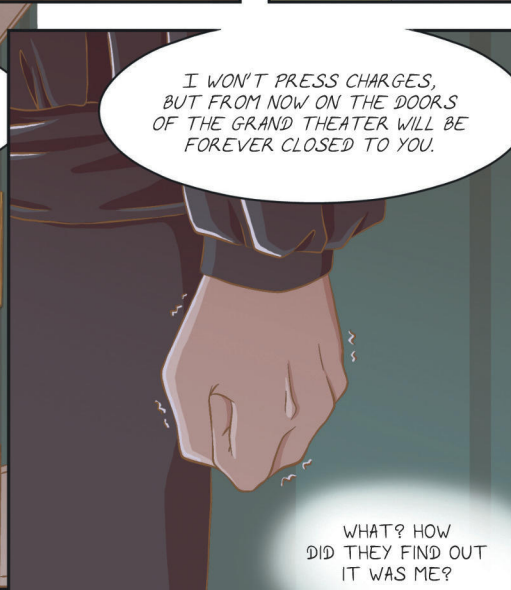
DO YOU  
RECOGNIZE THIS  
CLOCK?

IT ONCE ADORNED A ROOM  
ON THE TOP FLOOR OF THE  
THEATER. I HAD THE UNPLEASANT  
SURPRISE OF FINDING IT IN AN  
ANTIQUE SHOP.



THE OWNER SWORE HE ACQUIRED  
IT FROM A COMPANY MEMBER, SOMEONE WHO  
MUST HAVE HAD ACCESS TO THAT FOURTH  
FLOOR ROOM.

FOR SOME TIME NOW  
I'VE BEEN GETTING REPORTS OF  
LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS. I'M SORRY  
TO SAY THAT THEY ALL LEAD  
BACK TO YOU.



I WON'T PRESS CHARGES,  
BUT FROM NOW ON THE DOORS  
OF THE GRAND THEATER WILL BE  
FOREVER CLOSED TO YOU.

WHAT? HOW  
DID THEY FIND OUT  
IT WAS ME?

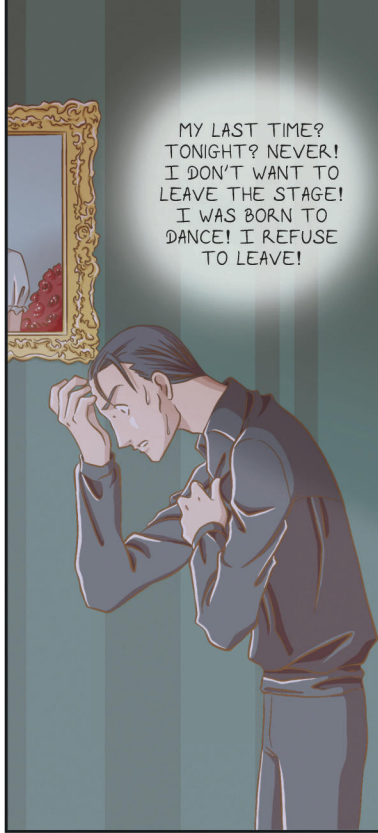


CONSIDERING THAT YOUR  
CAREER WAS COMING TO A CLOSE  
ANYWAY, YOU CAN STILL SAVE FACE  
BY ANNOUNCING AN EARLY  
RETIREMENT.

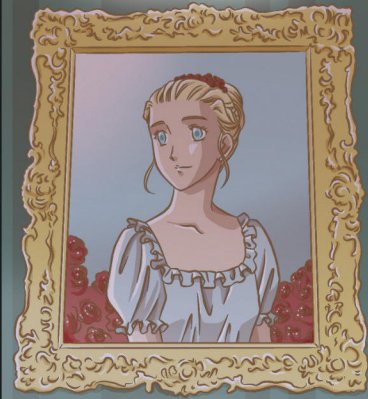




YOU'LL STILL PLAY THE PART OF THE WICKED FAIRY TONIGHT, BUT IT WILL BE THE LAST TIME. DON'T DISAPPOINT ME.



MY LAST TIME? TONIGHT? NEVER! I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THE STAGE! I WAS BORN TO DANCE! I REFUSE TO LEAVE!



THIS STAGE, THIS THEATER... IT WILL ALL BE MINE!



WHAT?! DANCE YOUR PART?

JUST FOR THE PROLOGUE. THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO. I'LL BE BACK IN TIME FOR ACT I.



HERE, TAKE THIS COSTUME! WITH YOUR NOSE, YOU WON'T NEED A PROSTHETIC ONE!

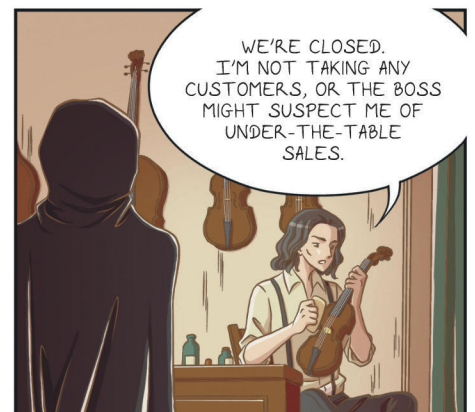
UH...



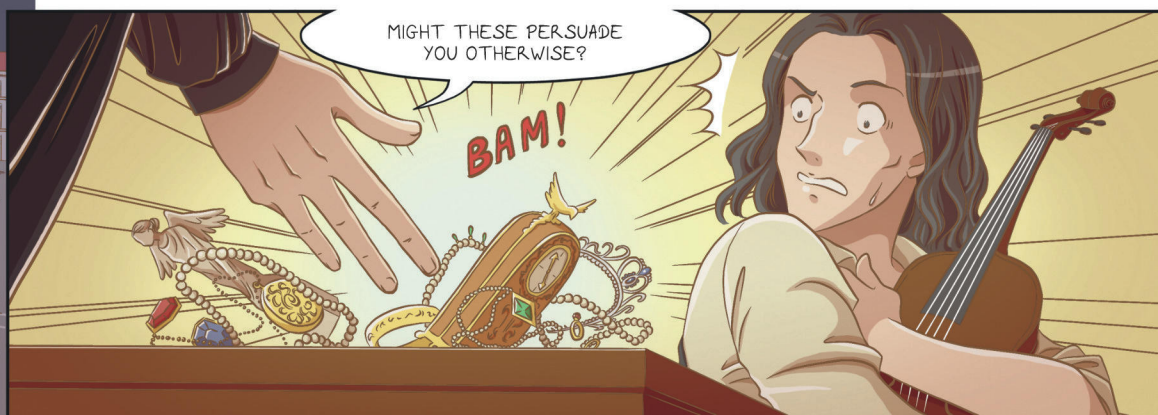
WAIT, DON'T GO! THE CURTAIN GOES UP IN A MATTER OF MINUTES!



CLING!  
CLING!



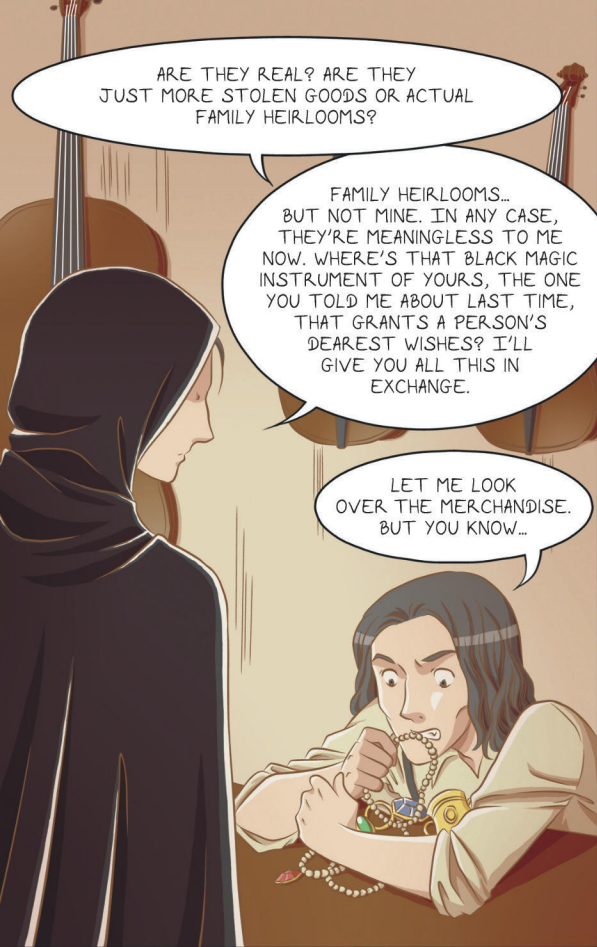
WE'RE CLOSED. I'M NOT TAKING ANY CUSTOMERS, OR THE BOSS MIGHT SUSPECT ME OF UNDER-THE-TABLE SALES.



MIGHT THESE PERSUADE YOU OTHERWISE?

BAM!





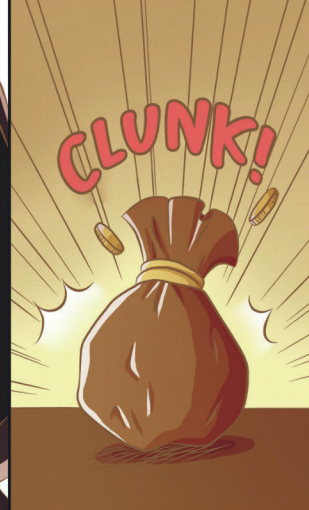
ARE THEY REAL? ARE THEY JUST MORE STOLEN GOODS OR ACTUAL FAMILY HEIRLOOMS?

FAMILY HEIRLOOMS... BUT NOT MINE. IN ANY CASE, THEY'RE MEANINGLESS TO ME NOW. WHERE'S THAT BLACK MAGIC INSTRUMENT OF YOURS, THE ONE YOU TOLD ME ABOUT LAST TIME, THAT GRANTS A PERSON'S DEAREST WISHES? I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THIS IN EXCHANGE.

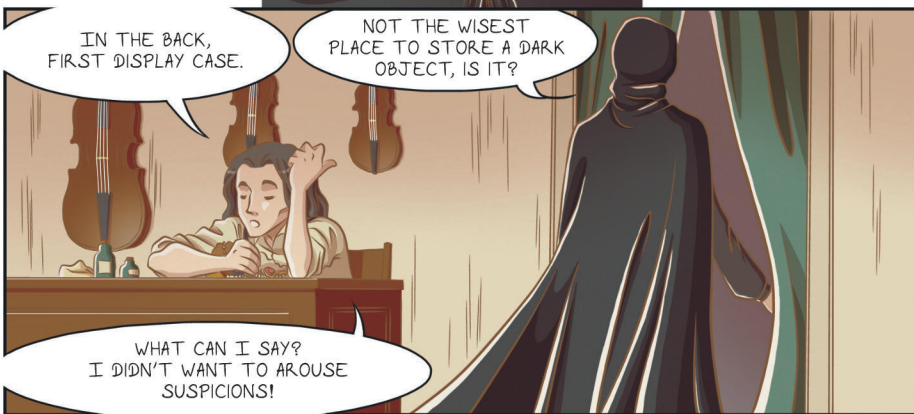
LET ME LOOK OVER THE MERCHANDISE. BUT YOU KNOW...



...IT'S QUITE VALUABLE... I'M NOT SURE THESE TRINKETS WILL SUFFICE...



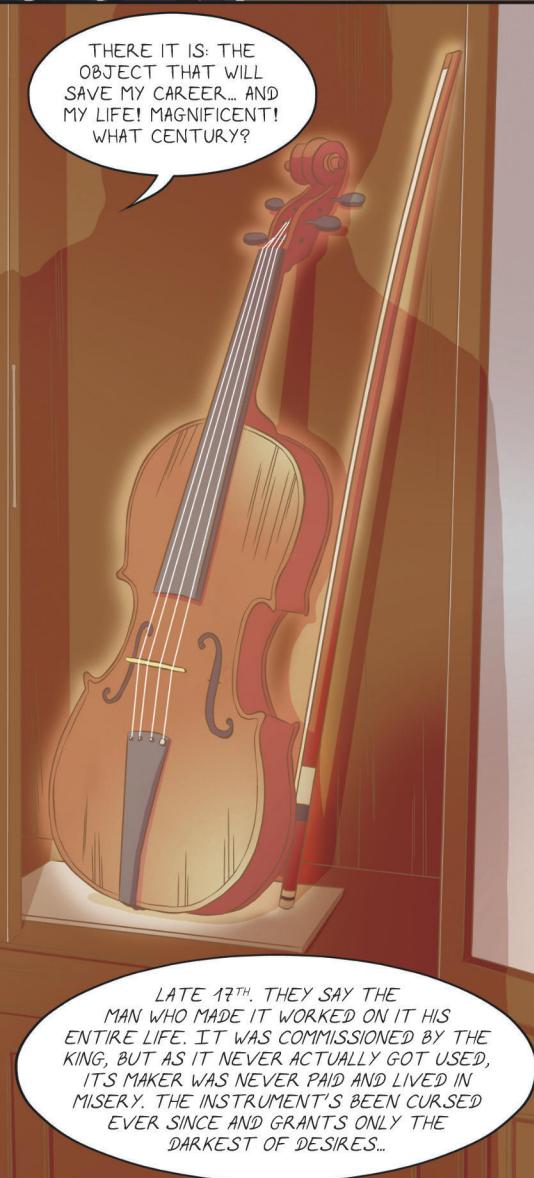
CLUNK!



IN THE BACK, FIRST DISPLAY CASE.

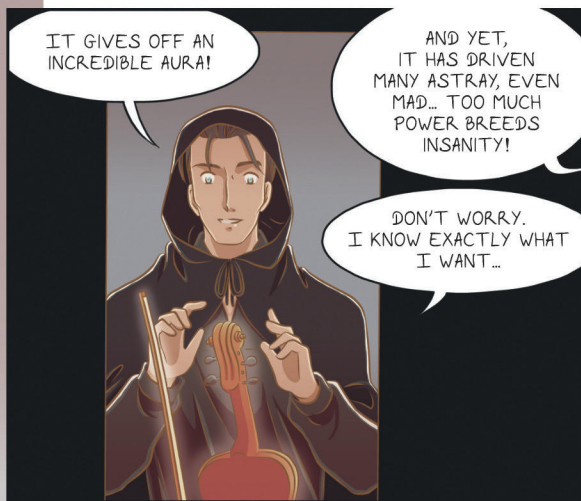
NOT THE WISEST PLACE TO STORE A DARK OBJECT, IS IT?

WHAT CAN I SAY? I DIDN'T WANT TO AROUSE SUSPICIONS!



THERE IT IS: THE OBJECT THAT WILL SAVE MY CAREER... AND MY LIFE! MAGNIFICENT! WHAT CENTURY?

LATE 17<sup>TH</sup>. THEY SAY THE MAN WHO MADE IT WORKED ON IT HIS ENTIRE LIFE. IT WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE KING, BUT AS IT NEVER ACTUALLY GOT USED, ITS MAKER WAS NEVER PAID AND LIVED IN MISERY. THE INSTRUMENT'S BEEN CURSED EVER SINCE AND GRANTS ONLY THE DARKEST OF DESIRES...



IT GIVES OFF AN INCREDIBLE AURA!

AND YET, IT HAS DRIVEN MANY ASTRAY, EVEN MAD... TOO MUCH POWER BREEDS INSANITY!

DON'T WORRY. I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I WANT...



REMEMBER THAT IN ORDER TO GET YOUR WISH, YOU MUST GIVE IT SOMETHING PRECIOUS IN EXCHANGE... SOMETHING VITAL!

VITAL?



AAAAHHH!!!



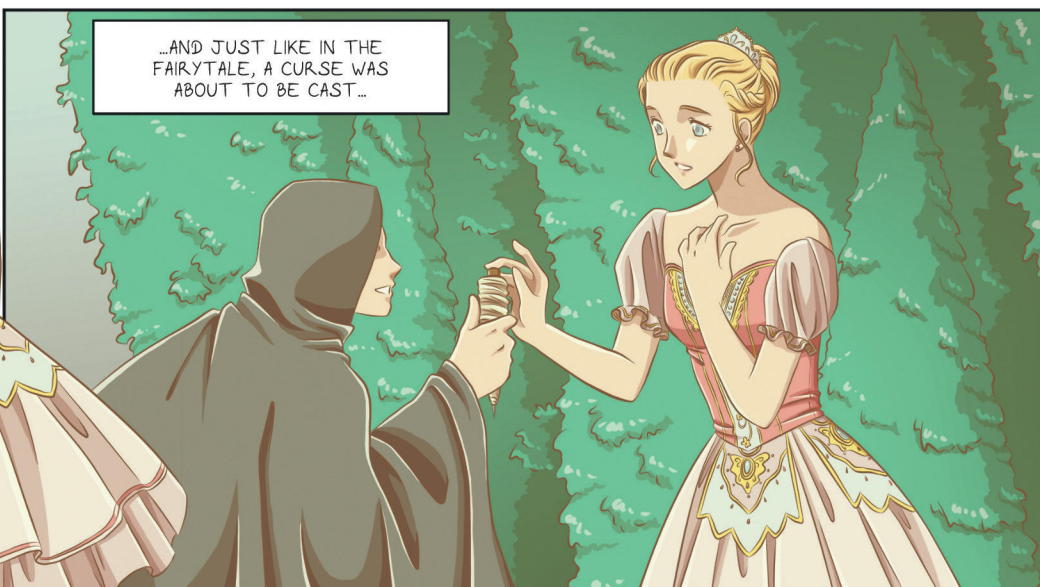
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

WHOOSH!



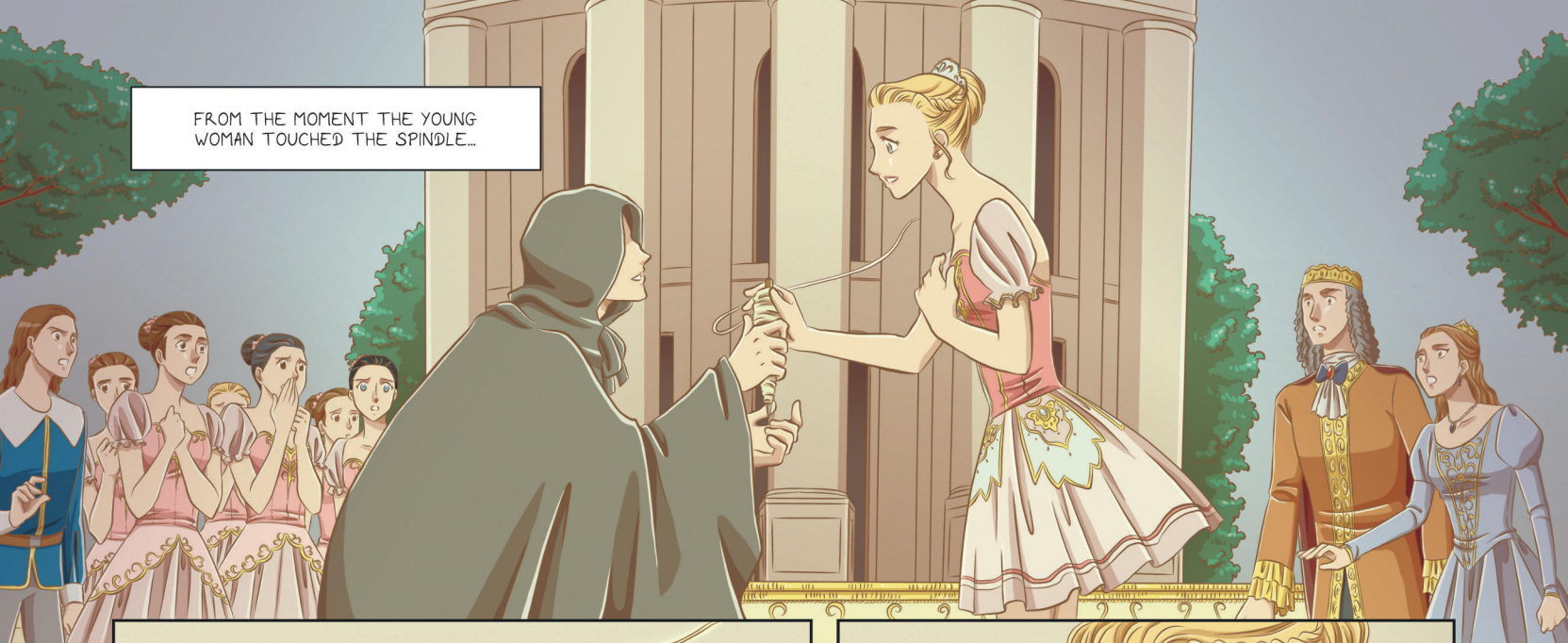


THAT EVENING, THE YOUNG DANCER'S DEBUT IN THE ROLE OF THE BEAUTIFUL AURORA EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS.

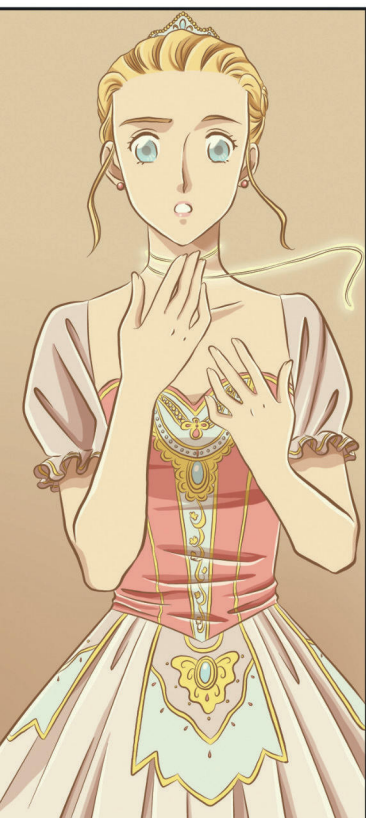
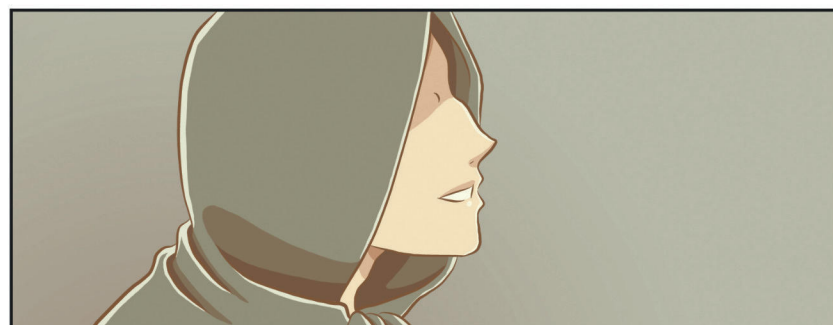
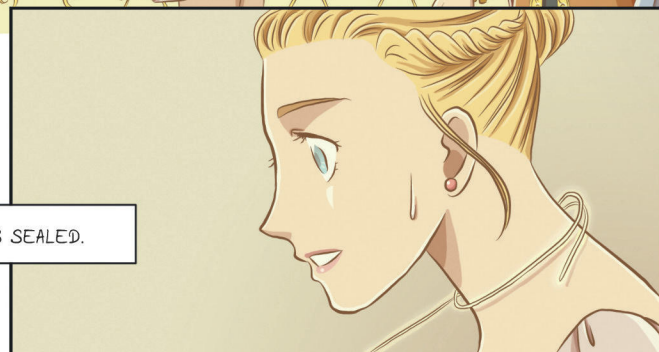




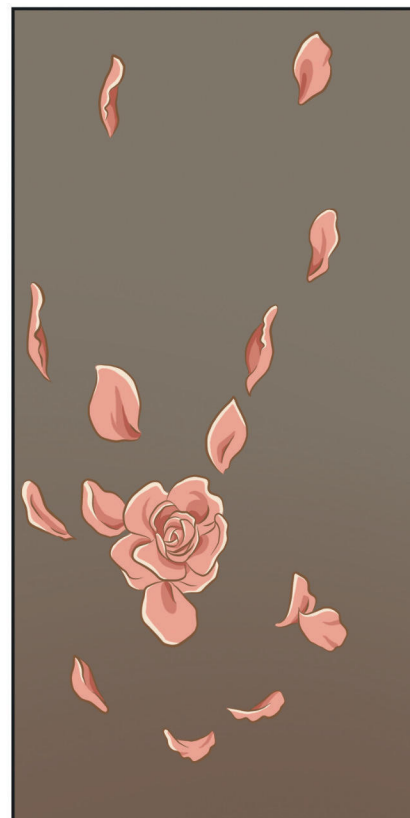
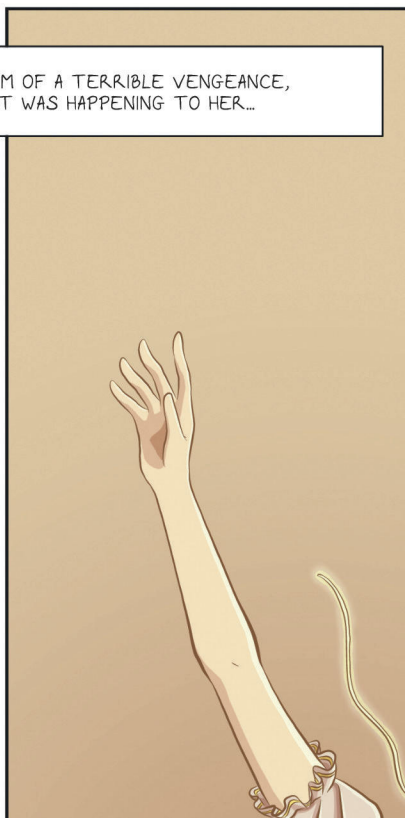
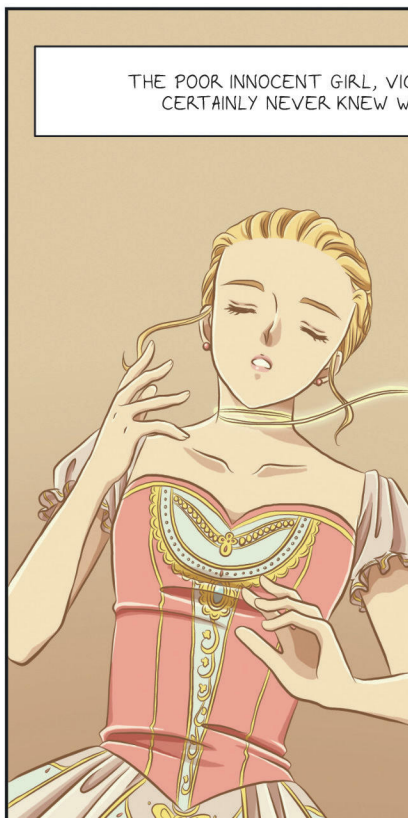
FROM THE MOMENT THE YOUNG  
WOMAN TOUCHED THE SPINDLE...



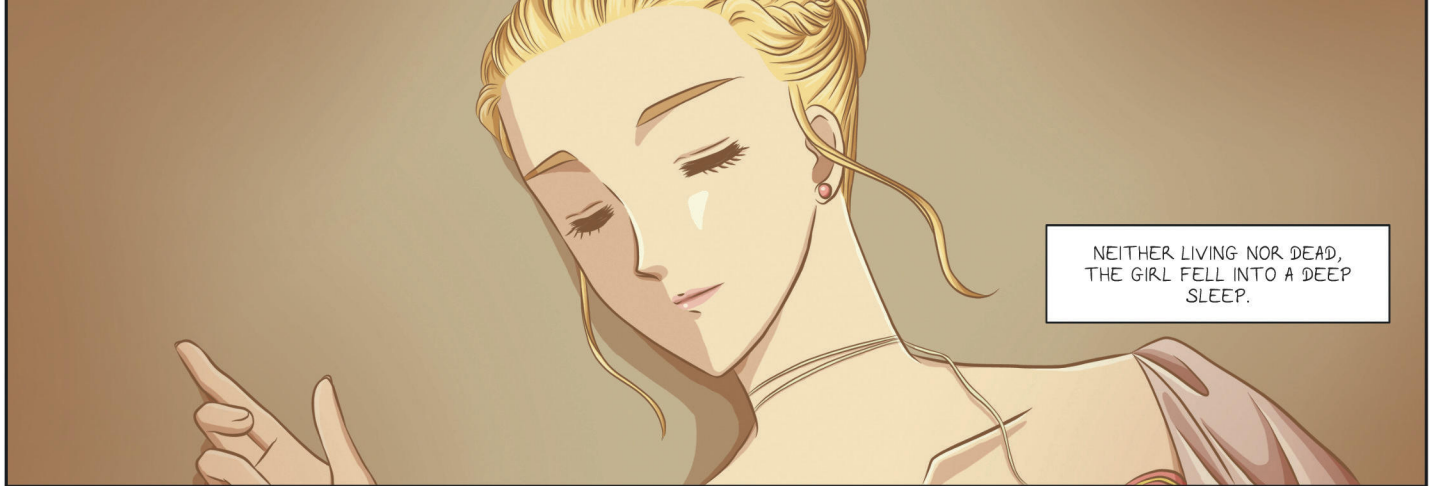
...HER FATE WAS SEALED.



THE POOR INNOCENT GIRL, VICTIM OF A TERRIBLE VENGEANCE,  
CERTAINLY NEVER KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HER...



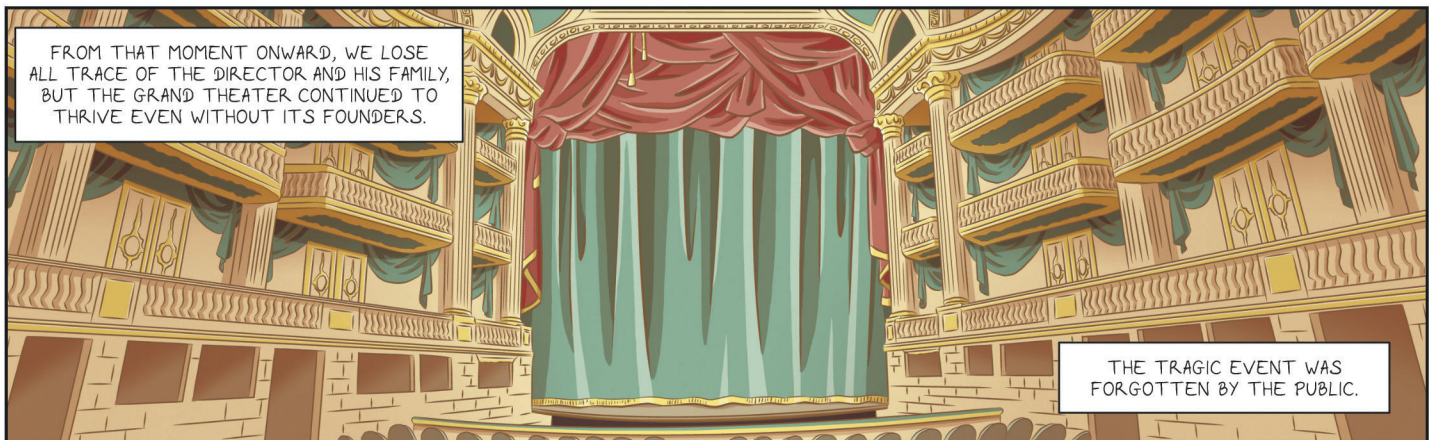




NEITHER LIVING NOR DEAD,  
THE GIRL FELL INTO A DEEP  
SLEEP.

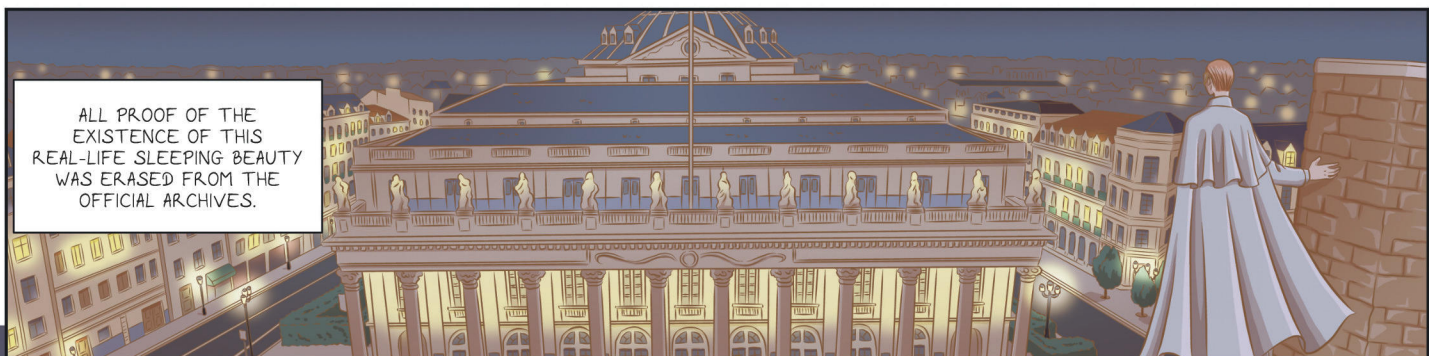


*SLEEPING BEAUTY* WOULD  
NEVER AGAIN BE PERFORMED  
BY THAT COMPANY...



FROM THAT MOMENT ONWARD, WE LOSE  
ALL TRACE OF THE DIRECTOR AND HIS FAMILY,  
BUT THE GRAND THEATER CONTINUED TO  
THRIVE EVEN WITHOUT ITS FOUNDERS.

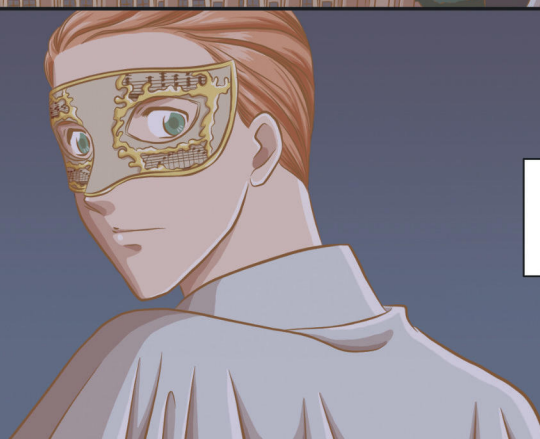
THE TRAGIC EVENT WAS  
FORGOTTEN BY THE PUBLIC.



ALL PROOF OF THE  
EXISTENCE OF THIS  
REAL-LIFE SLEEPING BEAUTY  
WAS ERASED FROM THE  
OFFICIAL ARCHIVES.

BUT I'VE UNCOVERED THE  
TRUTH, AND I'LL BE THE ONE  
TO AWAKEN HER!

I KNOW SHE'S OUT THERE  
WAITING, SOMEWHERE CLOSE BY.





SHE'S EVEN CLOSER THAN  
YOU MIGHT THINK!

IN FACT, SHE'S IN THE SOUTH TOWER  
OF THE GRAND THEATER'S ACADEMY OF  
DANCE AND MUSIC!



THE LIGHT IS  
GETTING STRONGER AND  
STRONGER. I'M ON THE  
RIGHT TRACK!

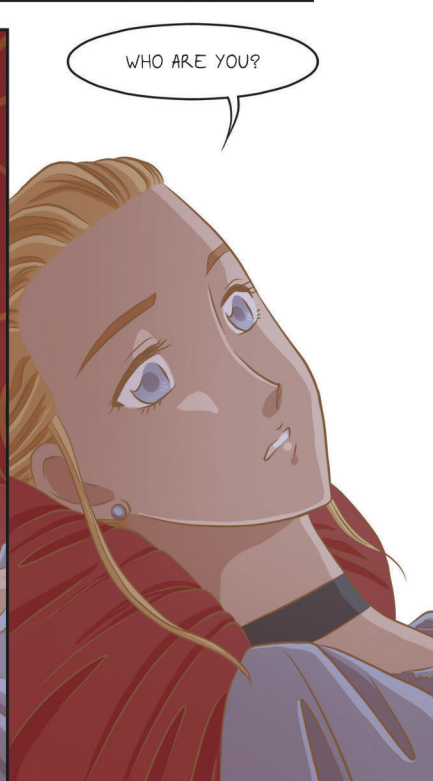
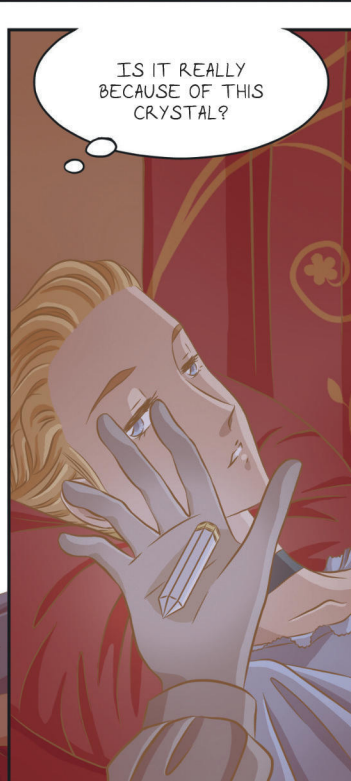
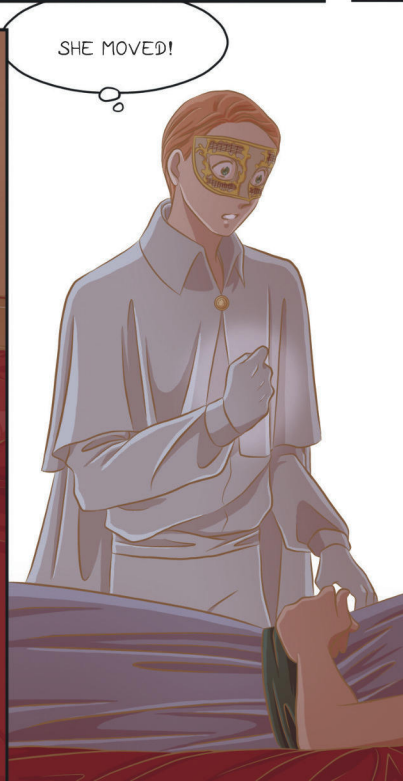
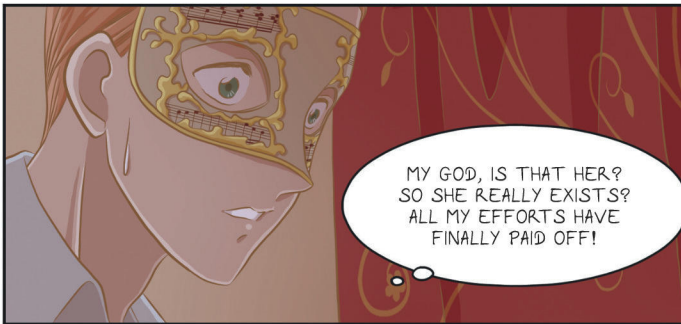
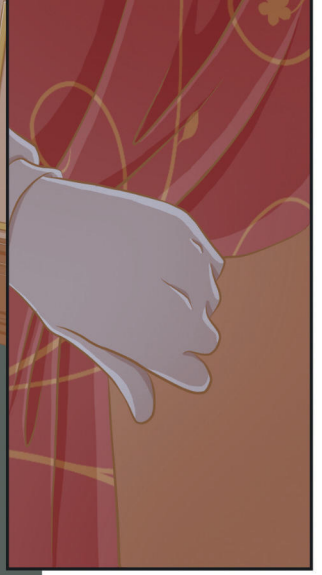
THIS BUILDING'S  
ABANDONED. IT'S BEEN  
OUT OF USE FOR  
AGES.



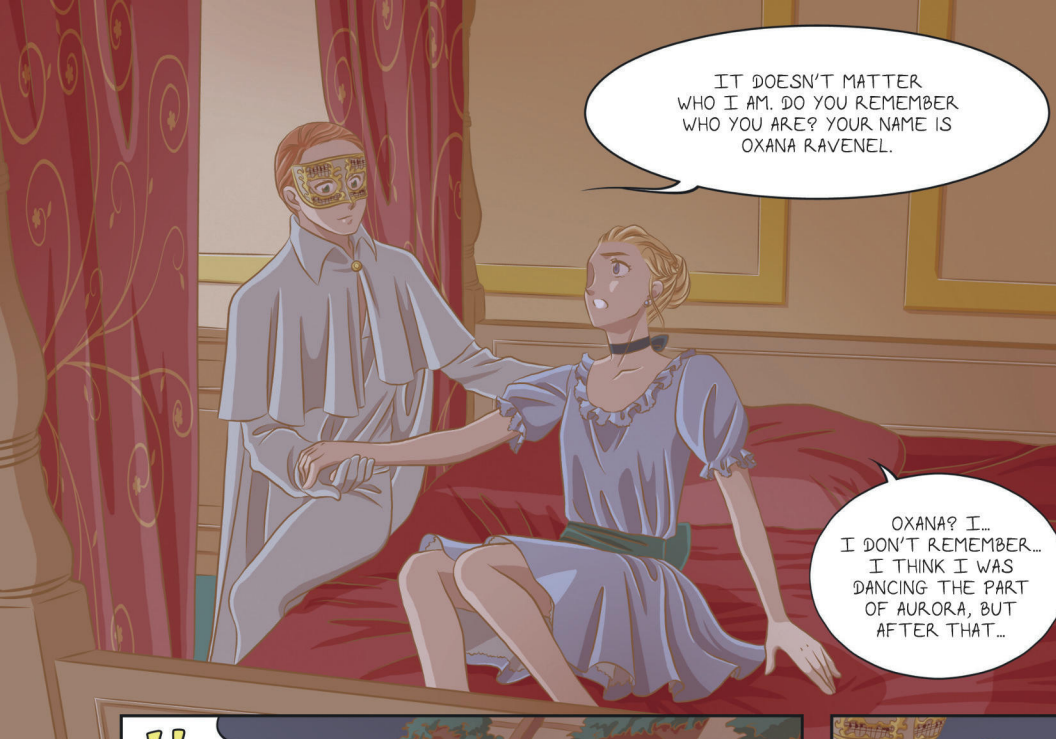
THE DOOR'S  
LOCKED. I'LL HAVE  
TO CLIMB.





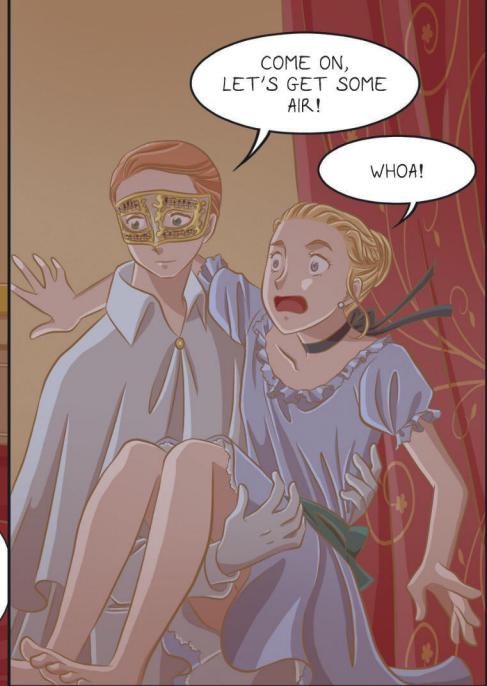






IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO I AM. DO YOU REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE? YOUR NAME IS OXANA RAVENEL.

OXANA? I... I DON'T REMEMBER... I THINK I WAS DANCING THE PART OF AURORA, BUT AFTER THAT...



COME ON, LET'S GET SOME AIR!

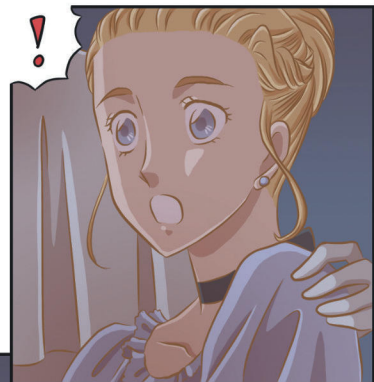
WHOA!



!!



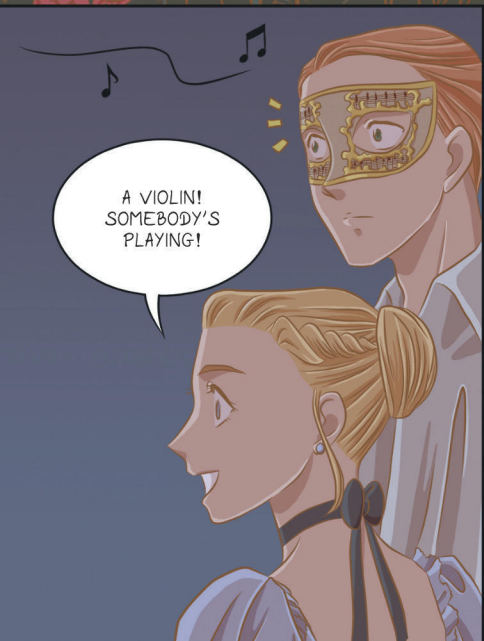
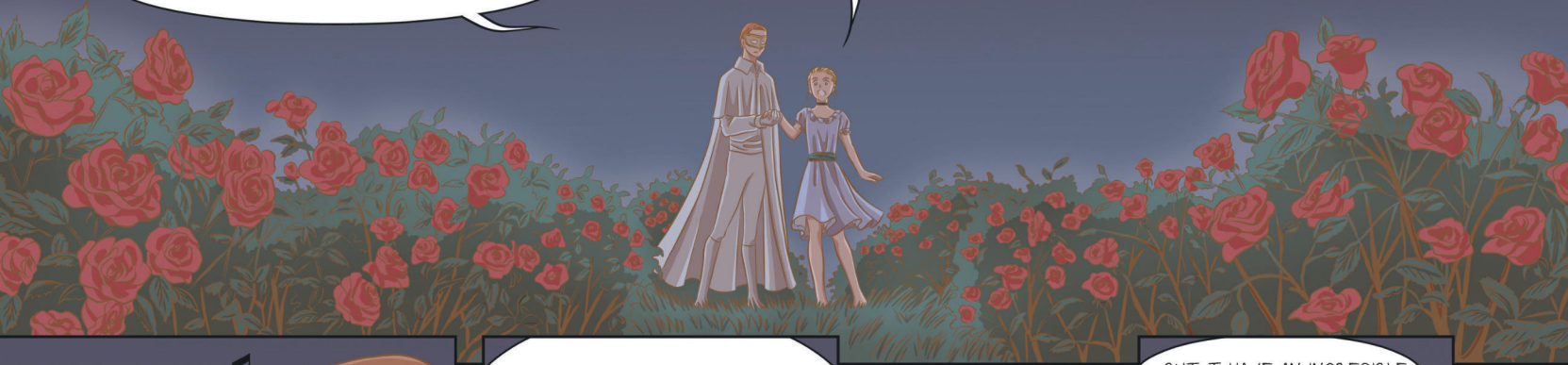
LOOK. NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF!



!

IT'S AS IF THESE ROSES BLOOMED JUST FOR YOU.

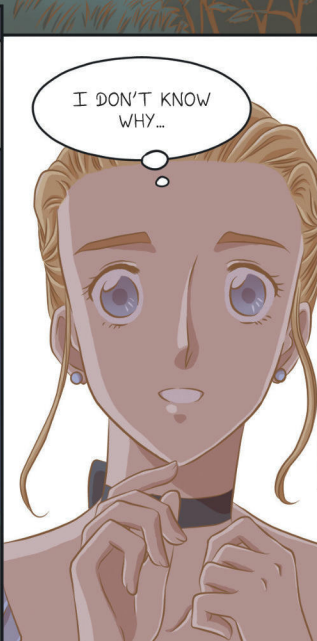
OOOH! HOW BEAUTIFUL!



A VIOLIN! SOMEBODY'S PLAYING!



IT'S FROM THE VISION SCENE, WHERE PRINCE DESIRE SEES AURORA'S GHOST AND FALLS IN LOVE WITH HER! THAT, I DO REMEMBER!

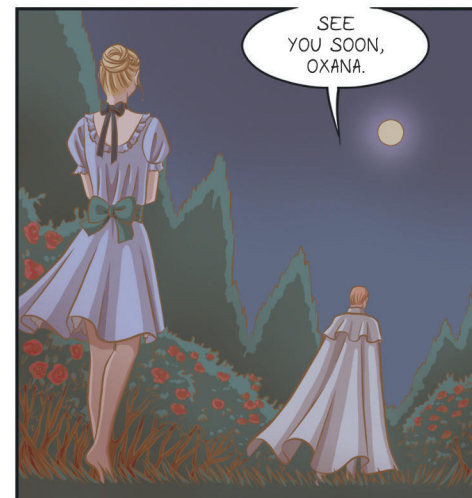
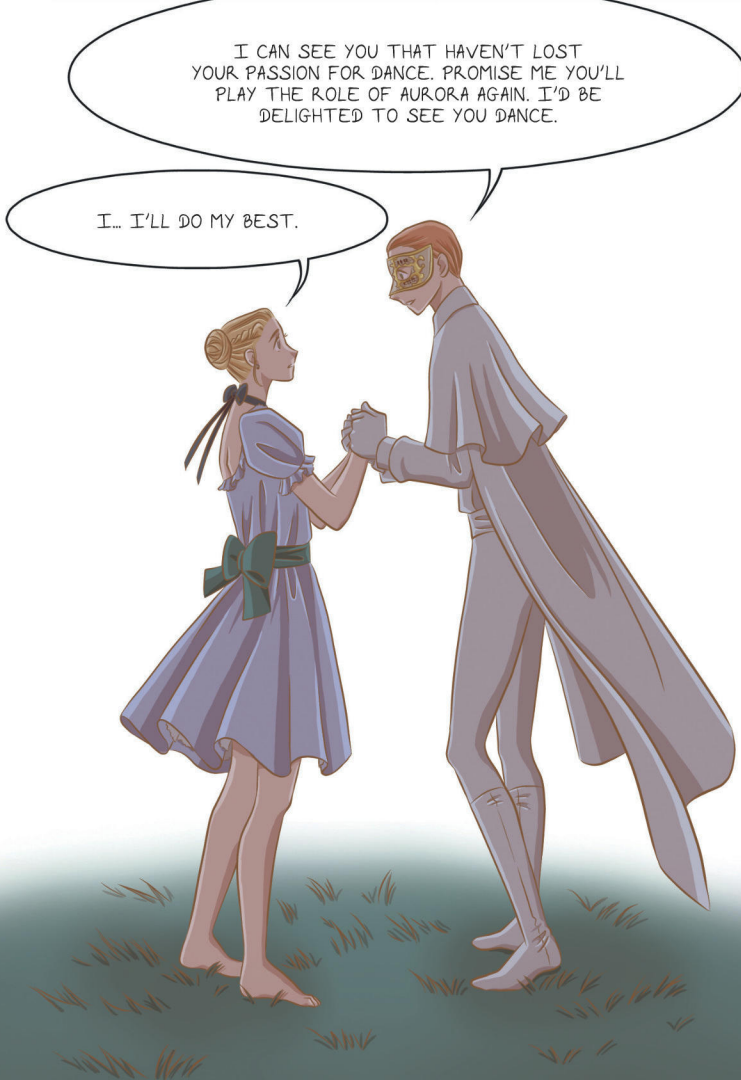
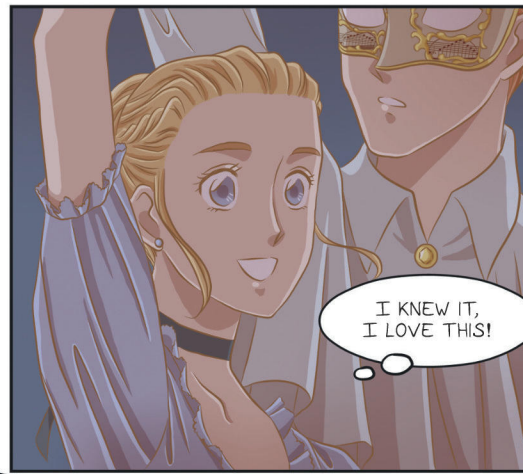
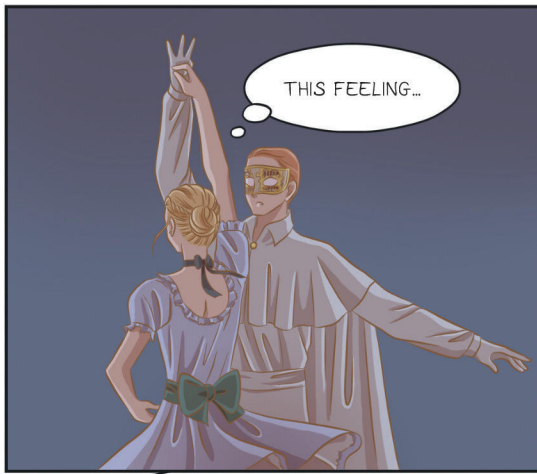
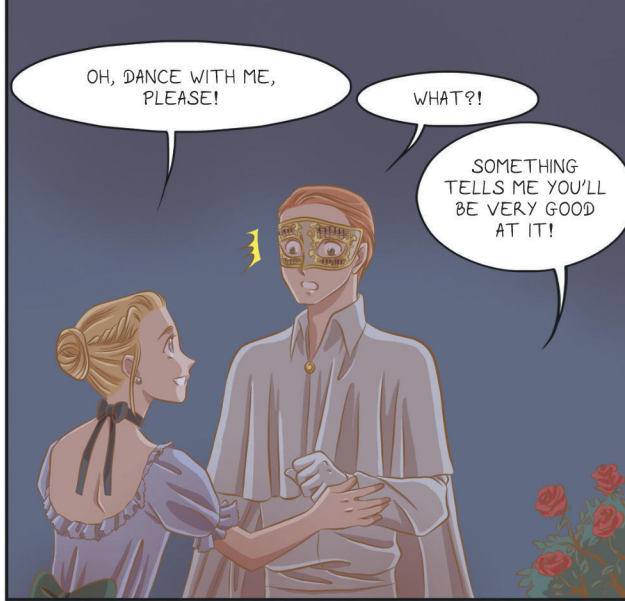


I DON'T KNOW WHY...

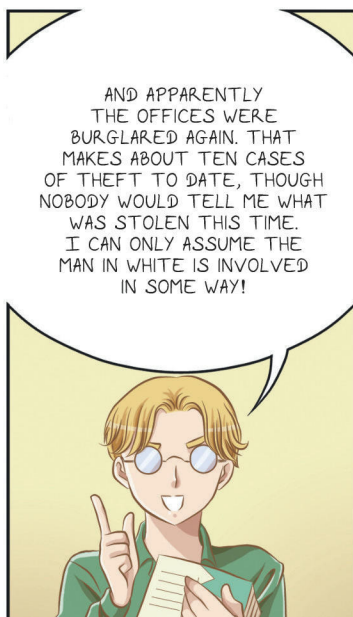
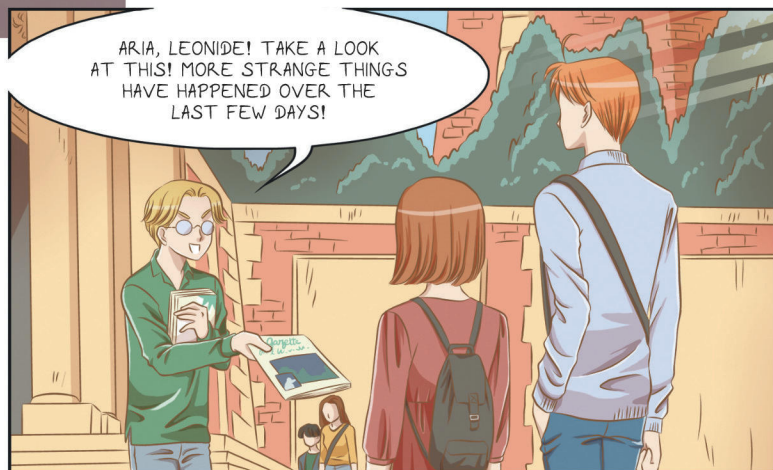
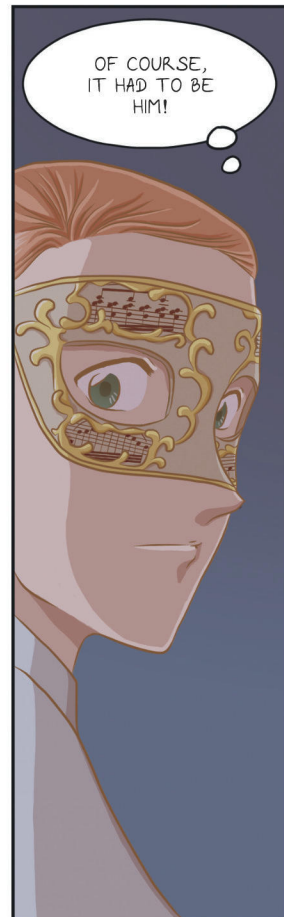
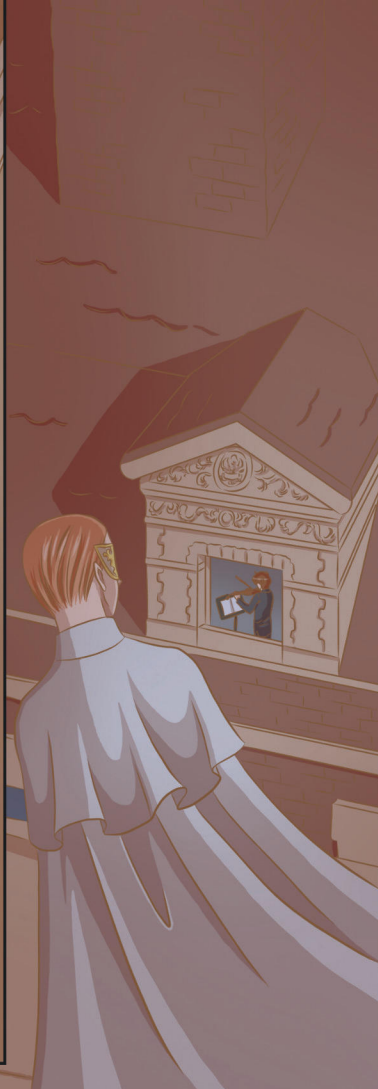


...BUT I HAVE AN INCREDIBLE URGE TO DANCE!

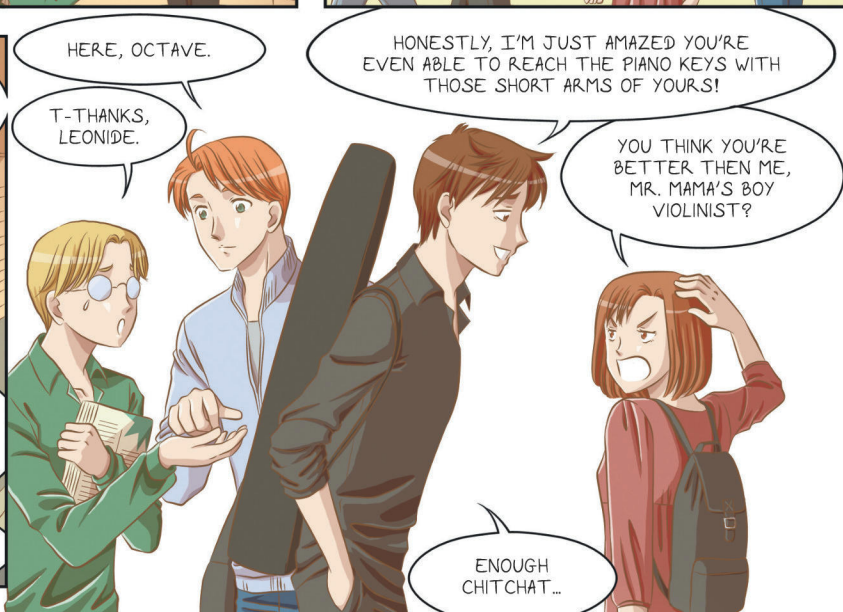
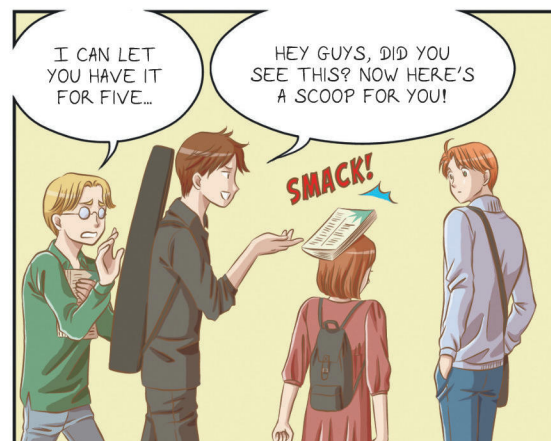




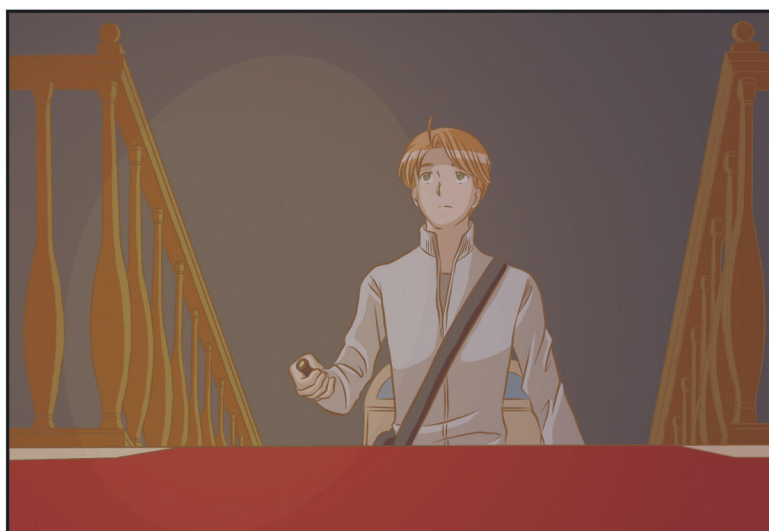
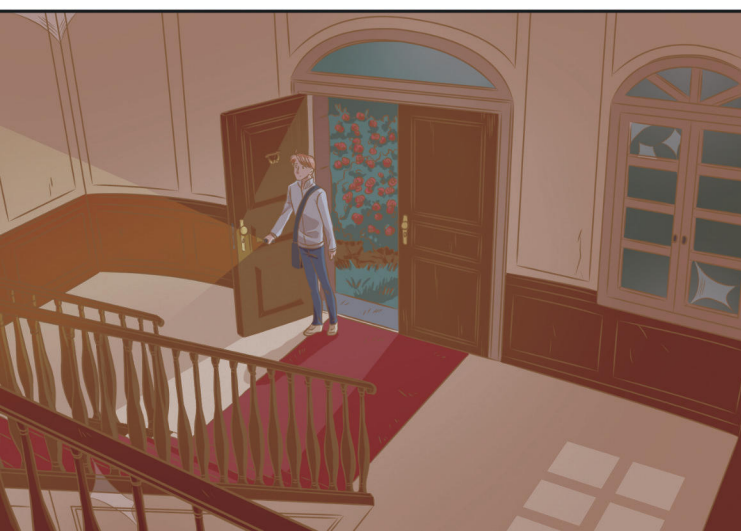
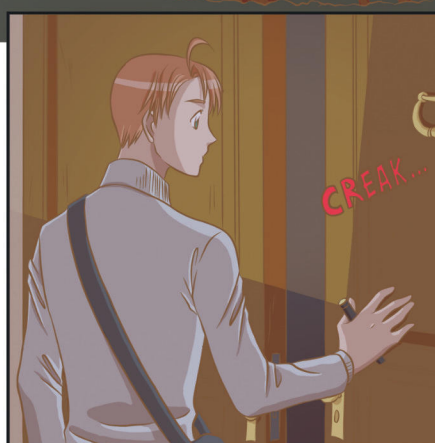
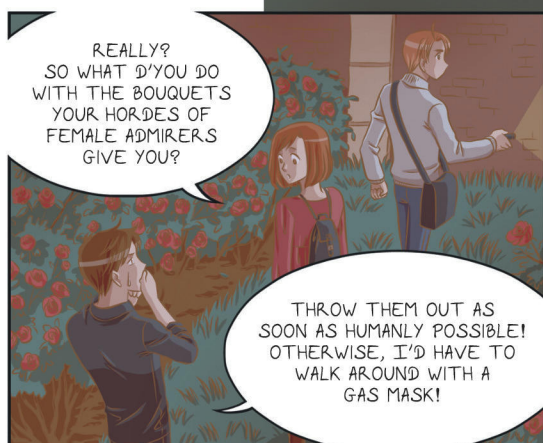
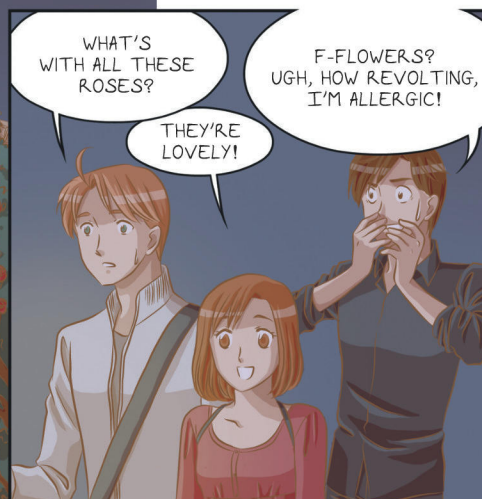
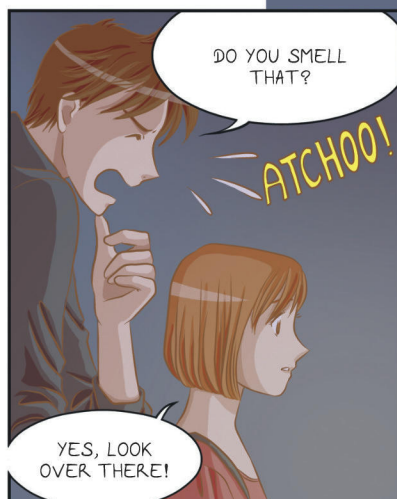
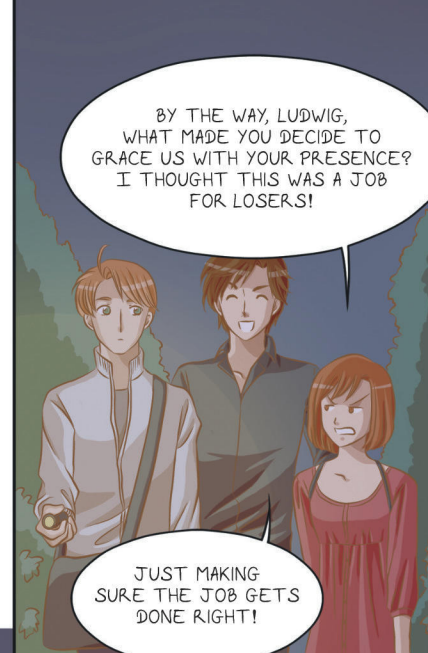
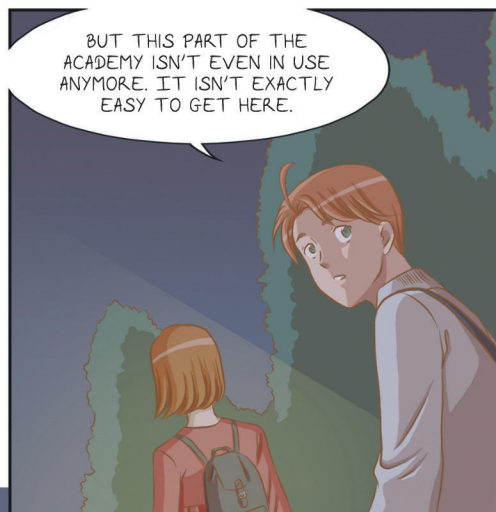




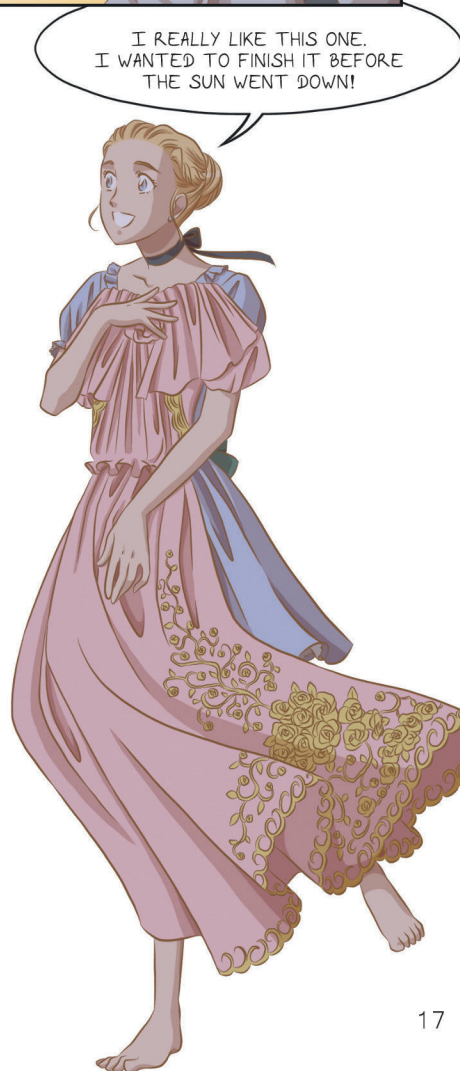
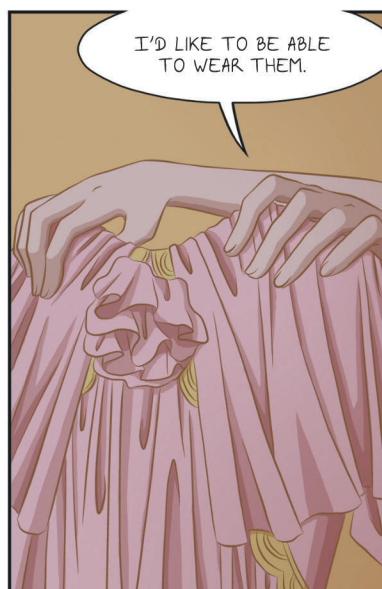
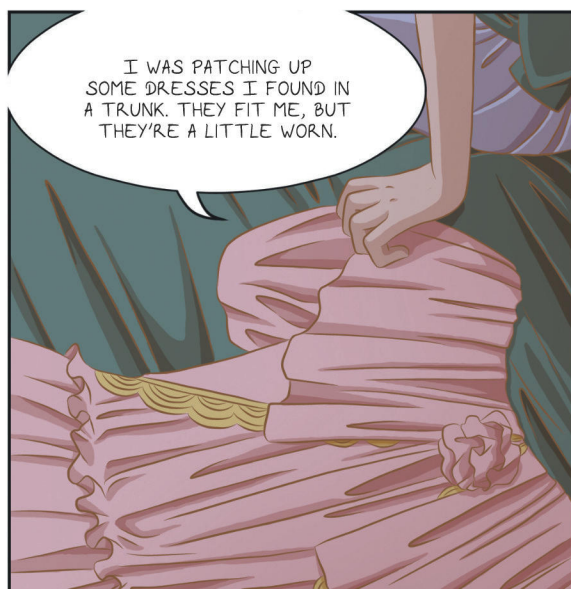
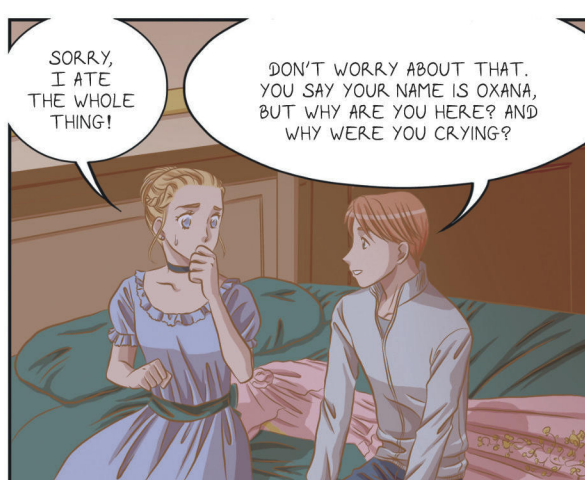
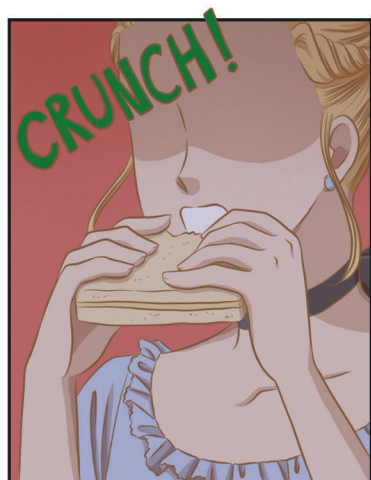
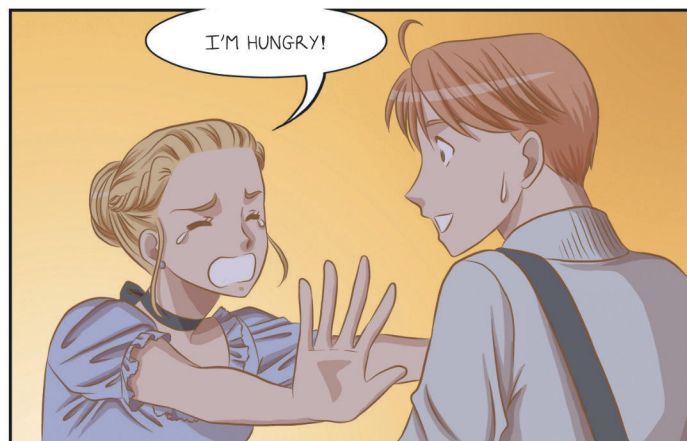
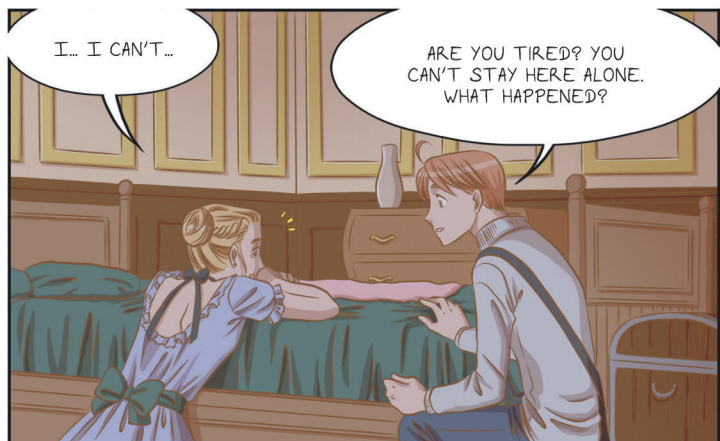




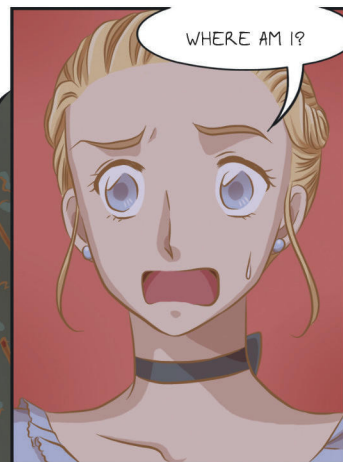
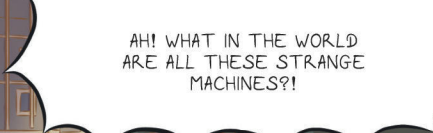
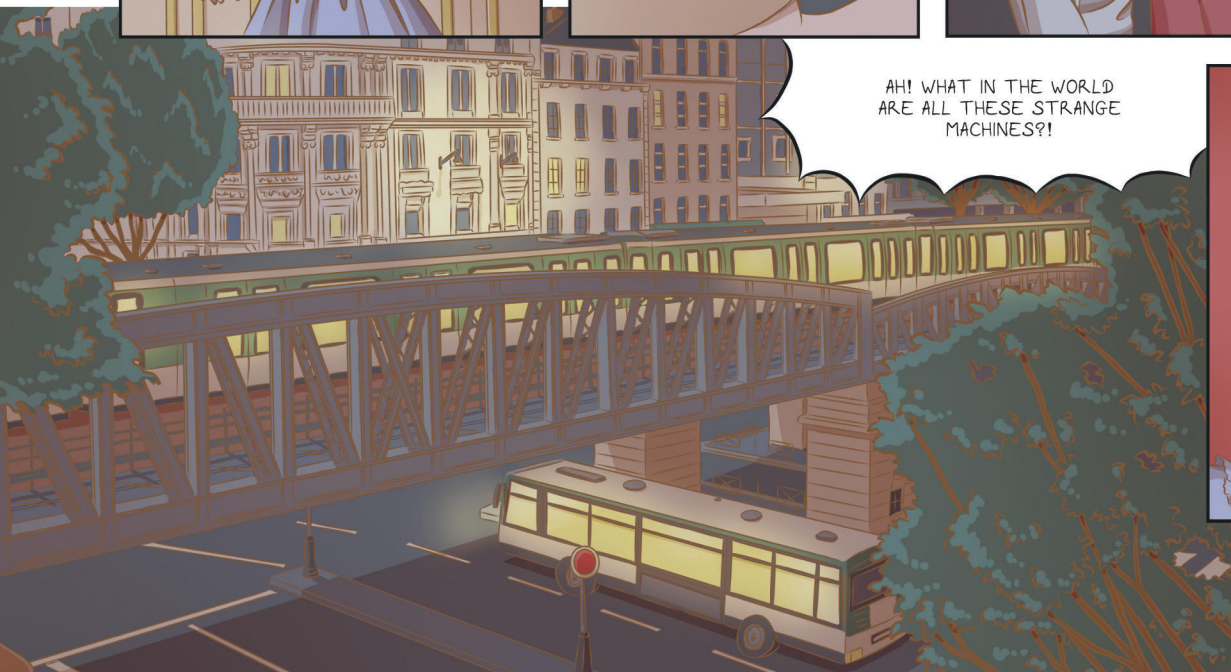
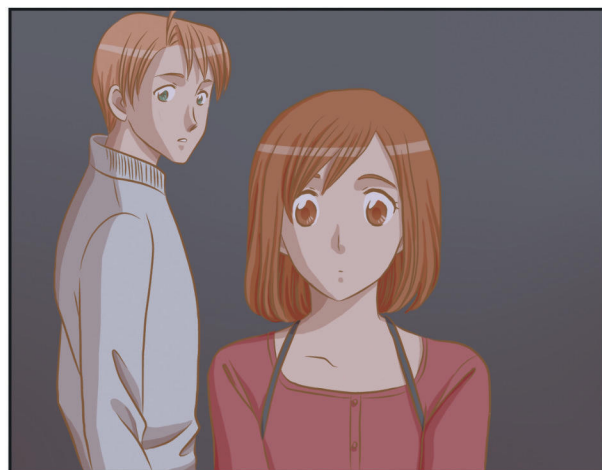
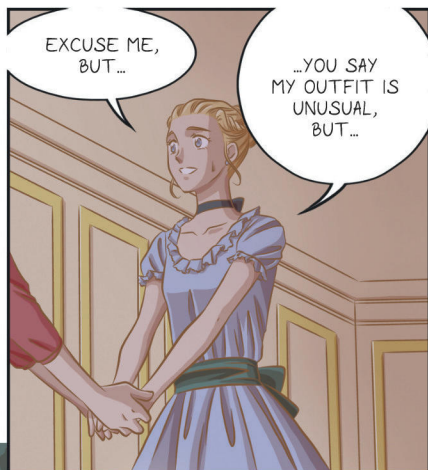
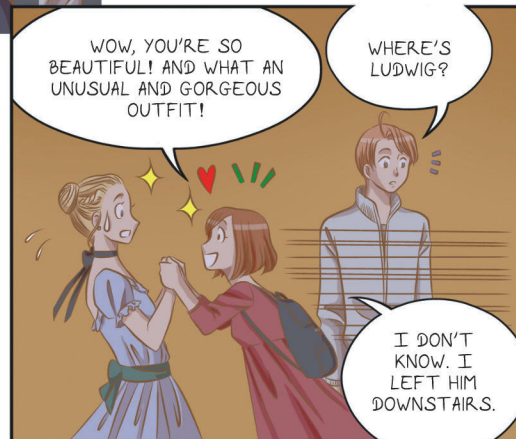
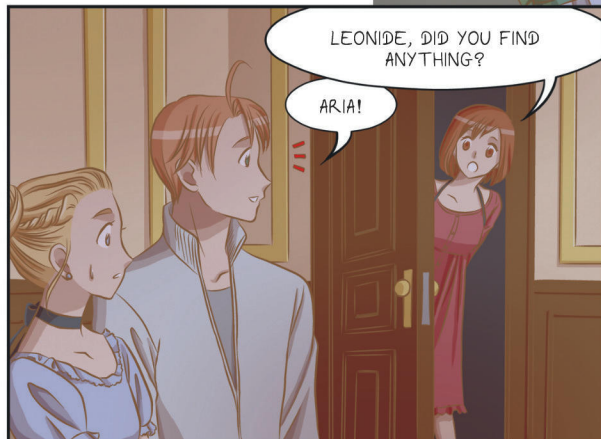
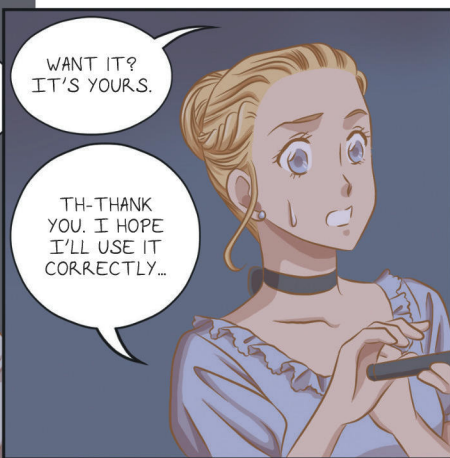











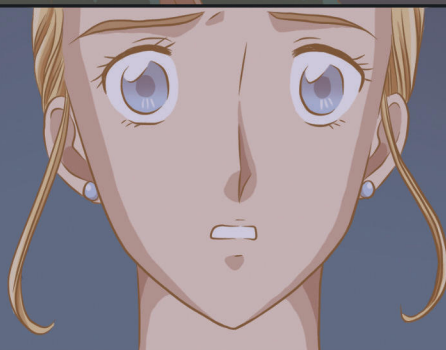






I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE! AND I WAS BORN AT THE TURN OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

THE QUESTION YOU SHOULD BE ASKING IS, "WHAT YEAR IS IT?" THIS IS THE END OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY!



HOW WILL I KEEP MY PROMISE NOW?

ARE YOU OKAY?

I PROMISED THE MAN IN WHITE I'D RETURN TO THE STAGE TO DANCE THE ROLE OF AURORA. BUT I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO DO THAT NOW!

WHY NOT? THE BALLET STILL EXISTS!

REALLY?

YES, THIS IS THE PLACE TO BE FOR A DANCER!

WHAT A BUNCH OF GARBAGE! WHAT IS THIS? SOME NUTJOB ACTING OUT SOME KIND OF FANTASY?

LUDWIG!

A GIRL FROM THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY? YOU DON'T BELIEVE HER, DO YOU?!

SO YOU SURVIVED THE ROSES... HOW UNFORTUNATE...

IT WAS NO MEAN FEAT! THERE ARE FLOWERS ALL OVER THE PLACE AROUND HERE!

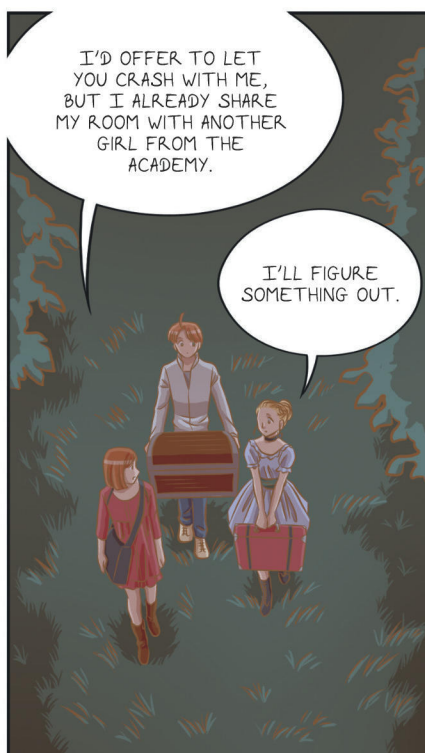
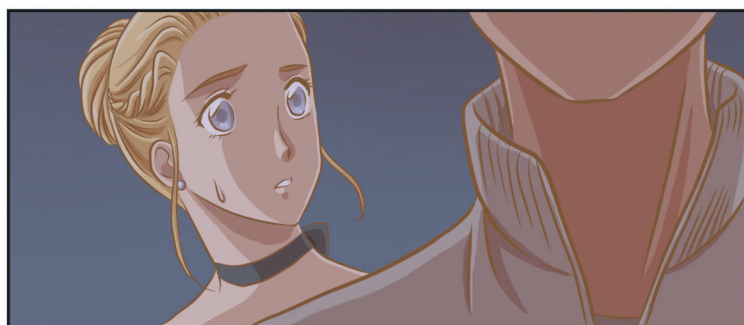
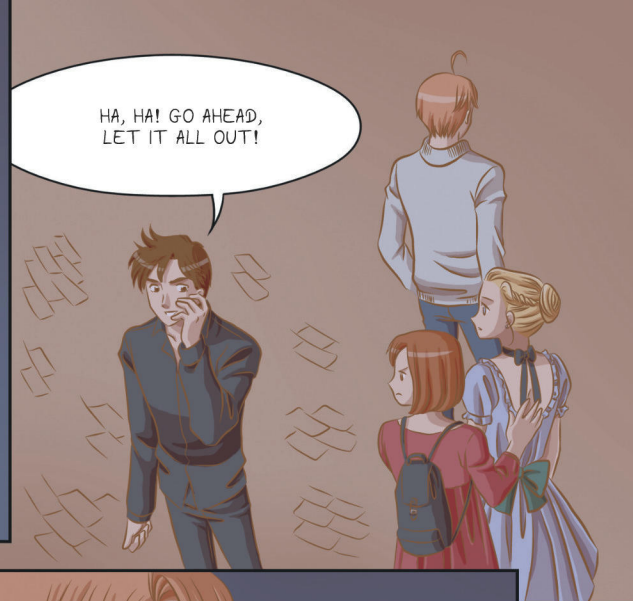
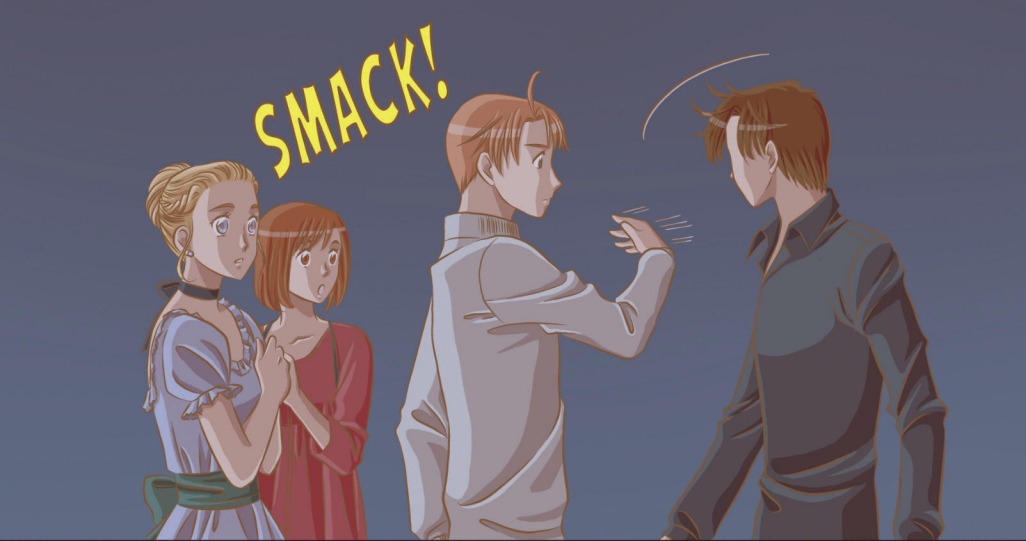
YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME! I'M A DANCER AT THE GRAND THEATER!

OH REALLY? I THINK YOU'RE ACTUALLY AN ACTRESS. AND A PRETTY TALENTED ONE!

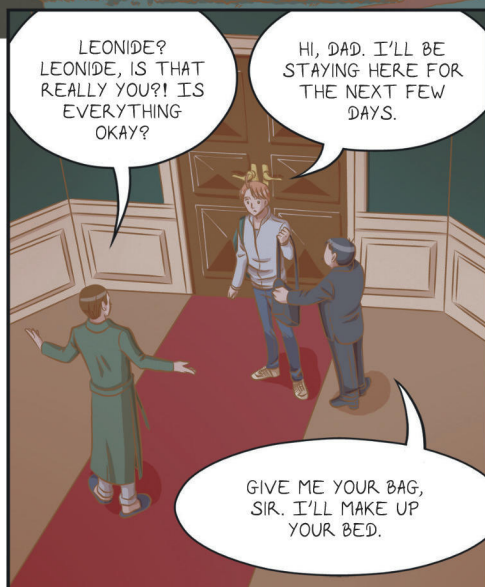
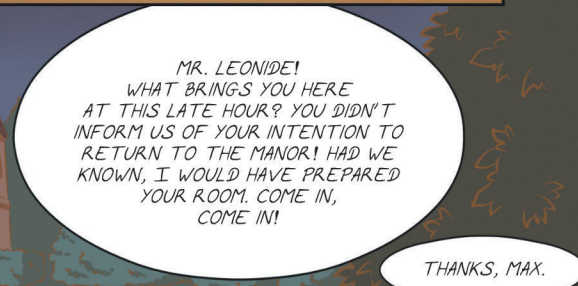
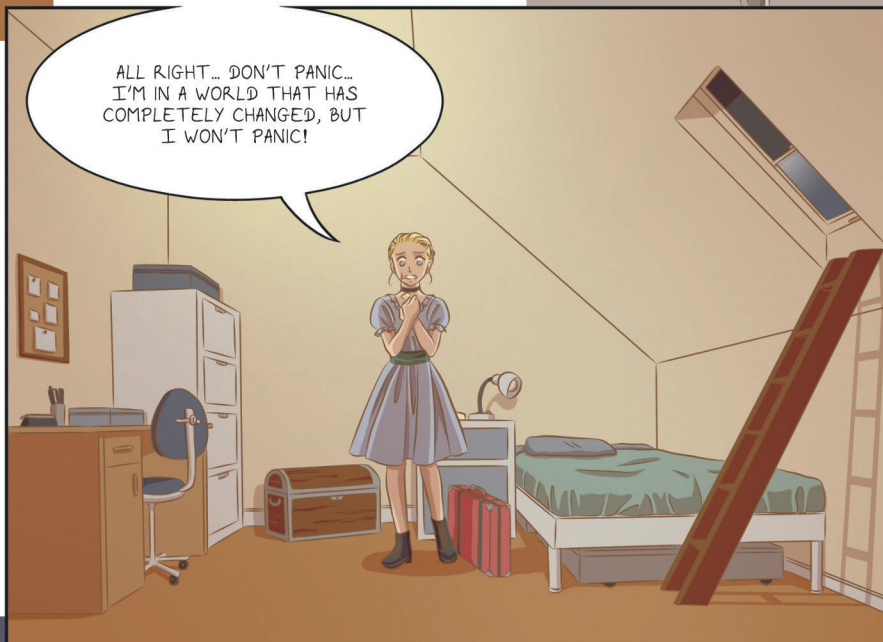
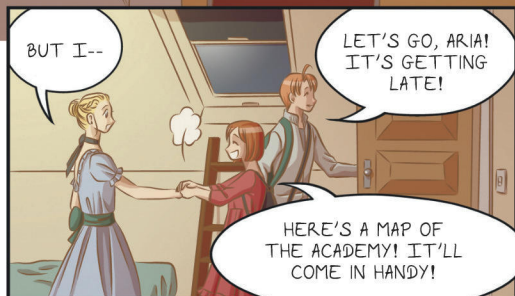
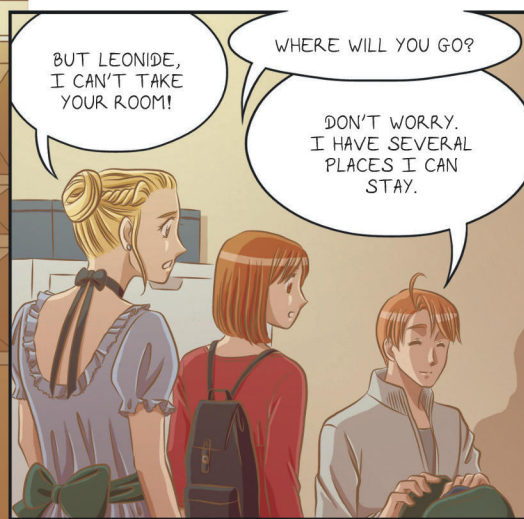
BUT LET'S SUPPOSE YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH...

...THEN YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DID TO THOSE GIRLS BACK THEN?





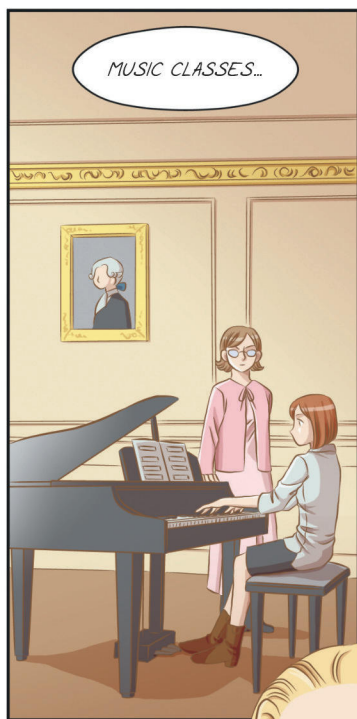




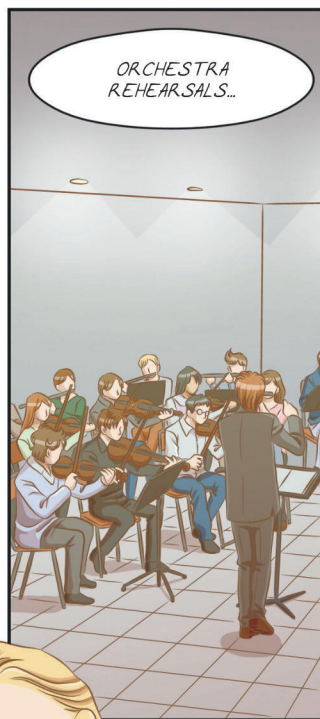




I'VE BEEN ABLE TO OBSERVE YOUR CLASSES OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS.



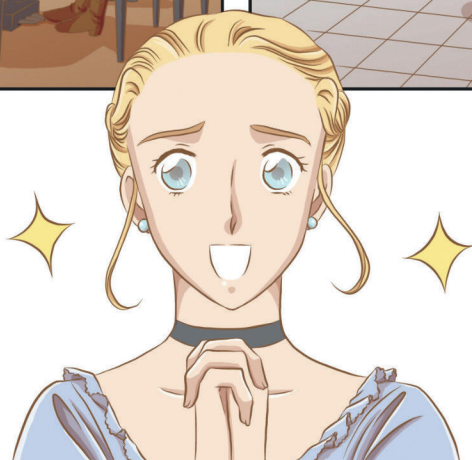
MUSIC CLASSES...



ORCHESTRA REHEARSALS...



DANCE CLASSES...



IT'S MARVELOUS! I'D HAVE LOVED TO ATTEND SUCH A WONDERFUL SCHOOL!

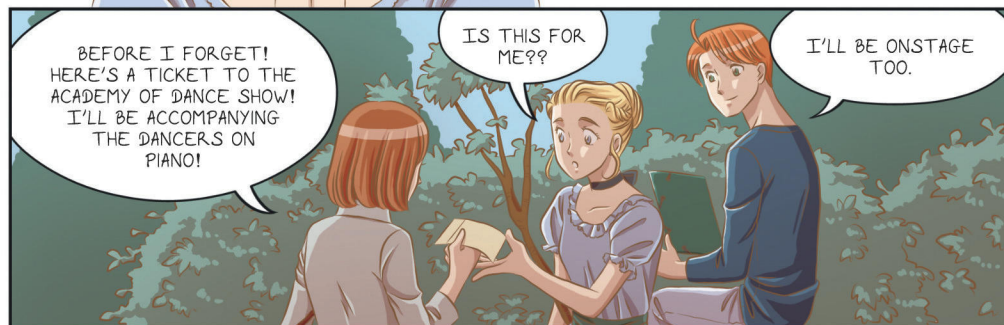
YOU'RE LEARNING EVERYTHING IT TAKES TO BECOME TRUE ARTISTS!



OXANA, HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO SEE ALL THOSE CLASSES? DIDN'T ANYONE NOTICE YOU?

NO! PROMISE! NO ONE NOTICED ME, EVEN DRESSED LIKE THIS!

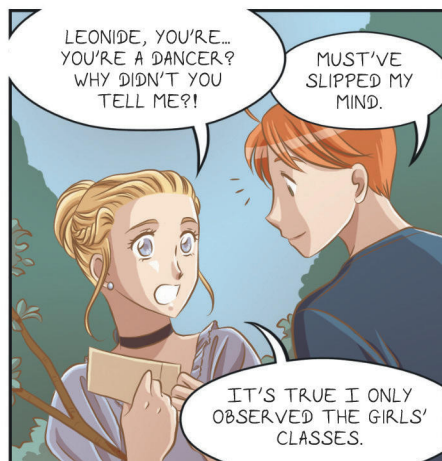
I DON'T THINK YOUR CLOTHES ARE WHAT'S ATTRACTING ATTENTION...



BEFORE I FORGET! HERE'S A TICKET TO THE ACADEMY OF DANCE SHOW! I'LL BE ACCOMPANYING THE DANCERS ON PIANO!

IS THIS FOR ME??

I'LL BE ONSTAGE TOO.



LEONIDE, YOU'RE... YOU'RE A DANCER? WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?!

MUST'VE SLIPPED MY MIND.

IT'S TRUE I ONLY OBSERVED THE GIRLS' CLASSES.

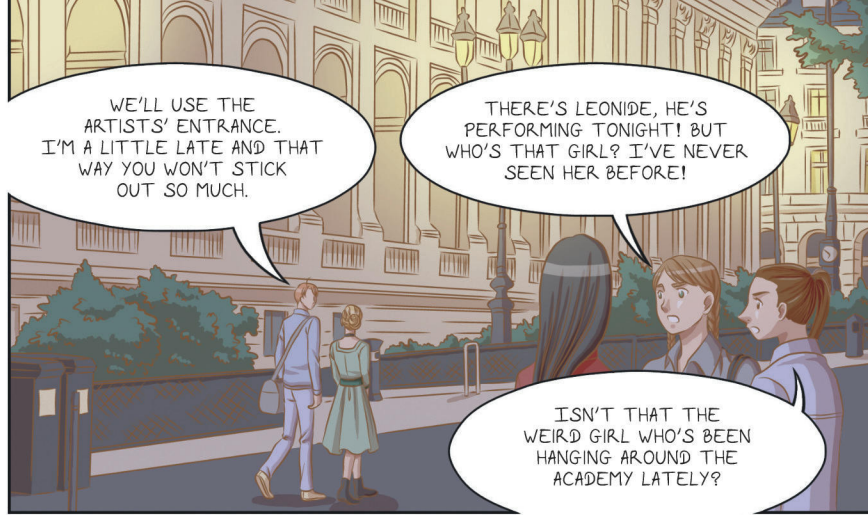
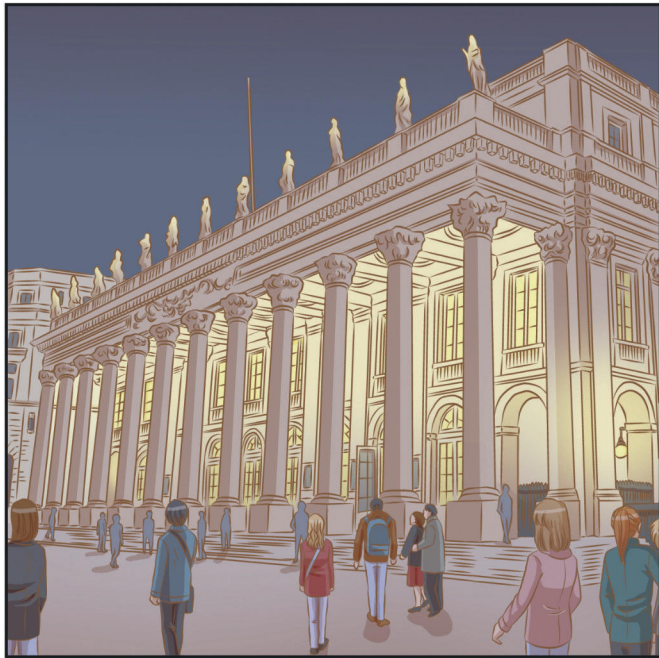
WE CAN GO TOGETHER IF YOU LIKE. THAT WAY YOU WON'T GET LOST.

AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GAUGE THE LEVEL OF SKILL NEEDED TO PASS THE COMPANY'S ENTRANCE AUDITION!

THANK YOU, LEONIDE! THANK YOU, ARIA! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU BOTH ONSTAGE!







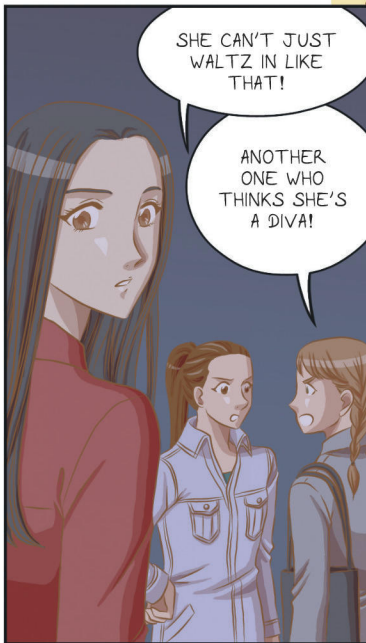
WE'LL USE THE ARTISTS' ENTRANCE. I'M A LITTLE LATE AND THAT WAY YOU WON'T STICK OUT SO MUCH.

THERE'S LEONIDE, HE'S PERFORMING TONIGHT! BUT WHO'S THAT GIRL? I'VE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE!

ISN'T THAT THE WEIRD GIRL WHO'S BEEN HANGING AROUND THE ACADEMY LATELY?

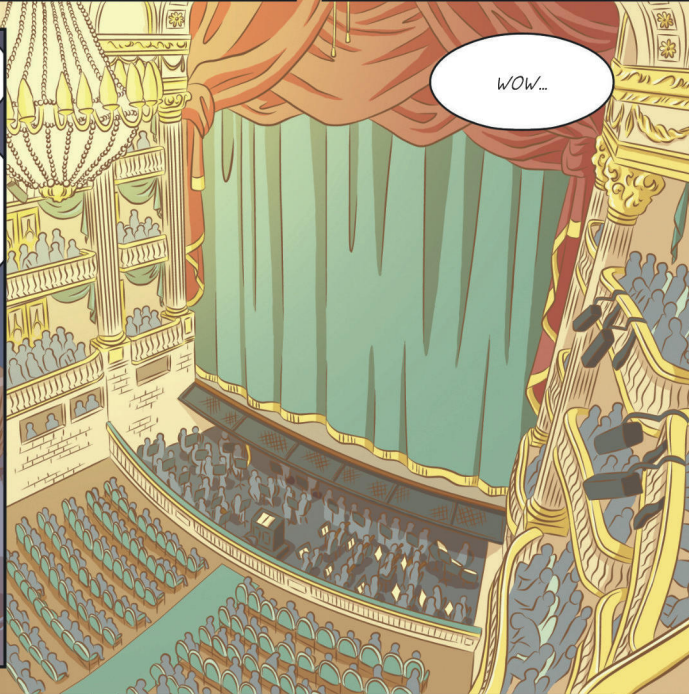


SUPPOSEDLY PEOPLE HAVE SEEN HER LURKING AROUND THE HALLS. WHAT IN THE WORLD IS SHE WEARING?

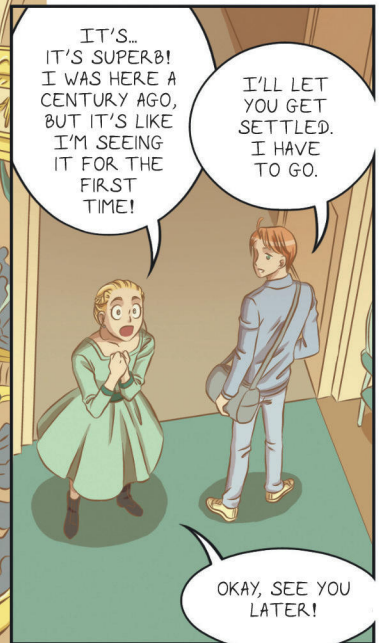


SHE CAN'T JUST WALTZ IN LIKE THAT!

ANOTHER ONE WHO THINKS SHE'S A DIVA!



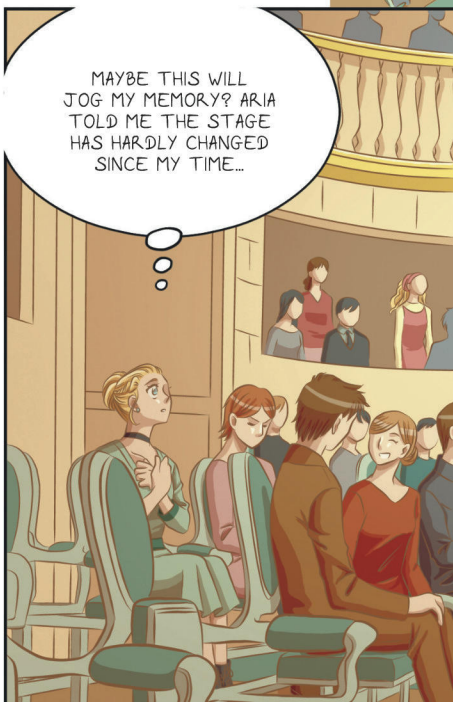
WOW...



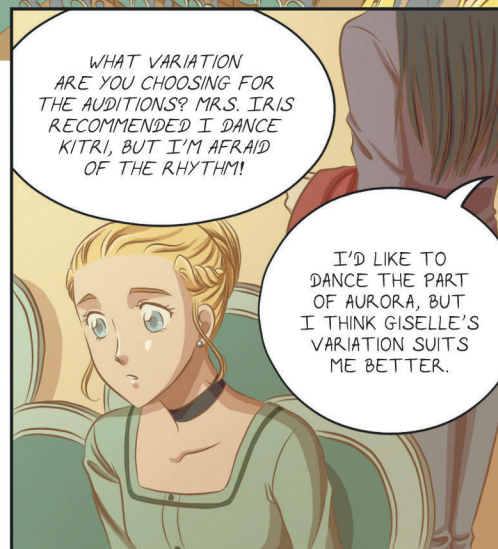
IT'S... IT'S SUPERB! I WAS HERE A CENTURY AGO, BUT IT'S LIKE I'M SEEING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME!

I'LL LET YOU GET SETTLED. I HAVE TO GO.

OKAY, SEE YOU LATER!

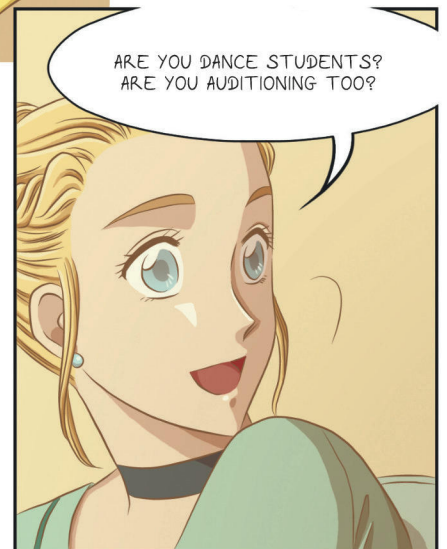


MAYBE THIS WILL JOG MY MEMORY? ARIA TOLD ME THE STAGE HAS HARDLY CHANGED SINCE MY TIME...



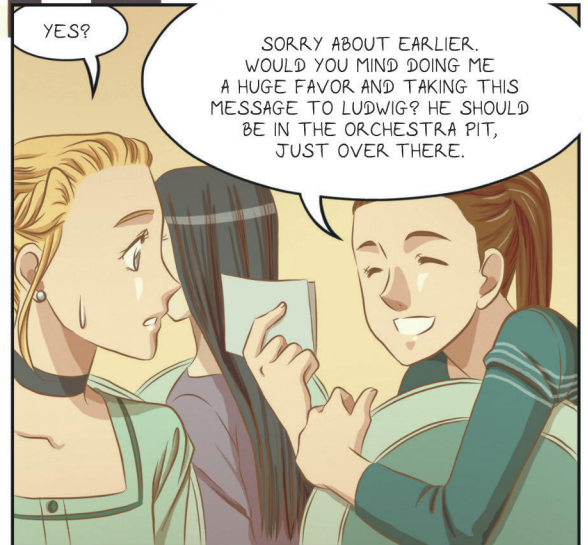
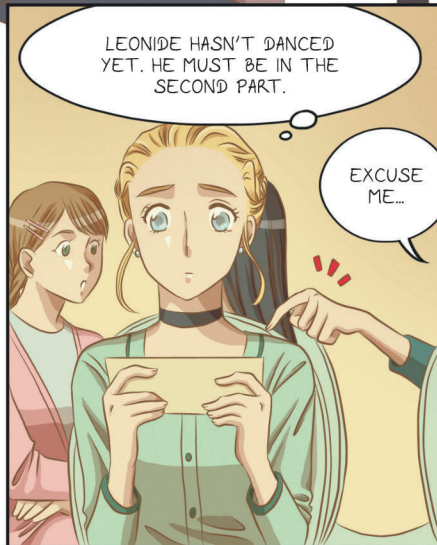
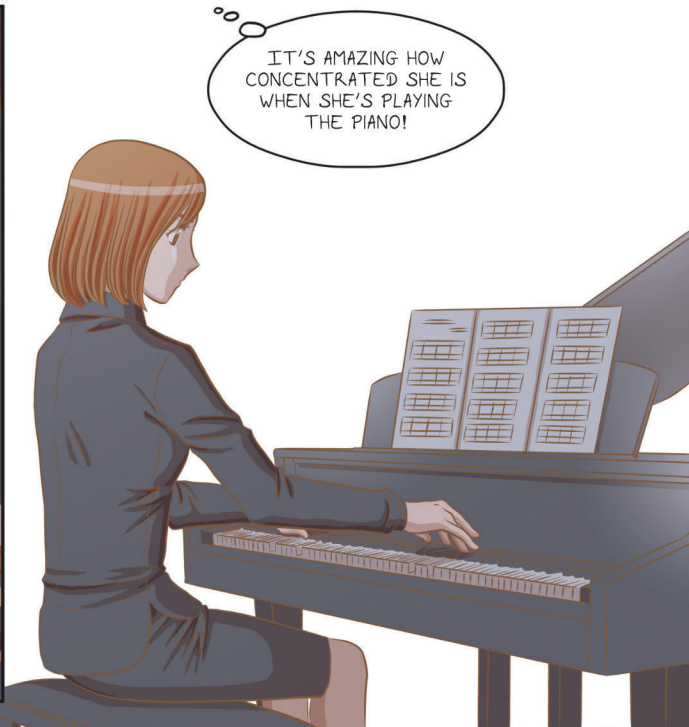
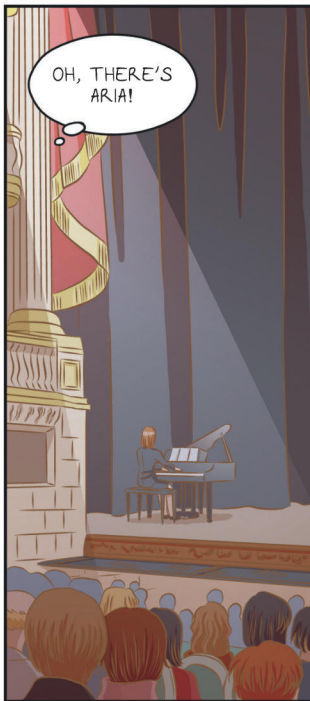
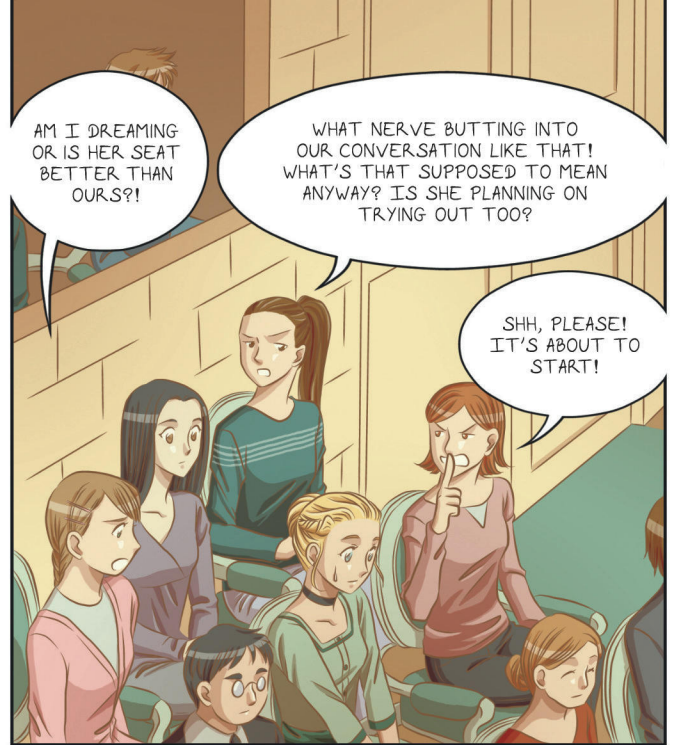
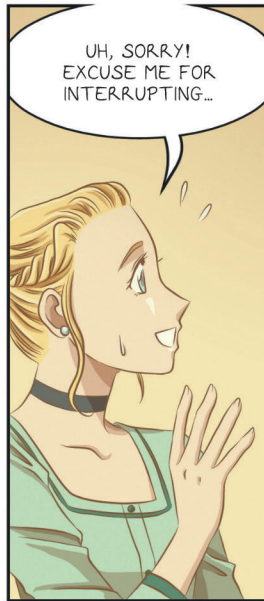
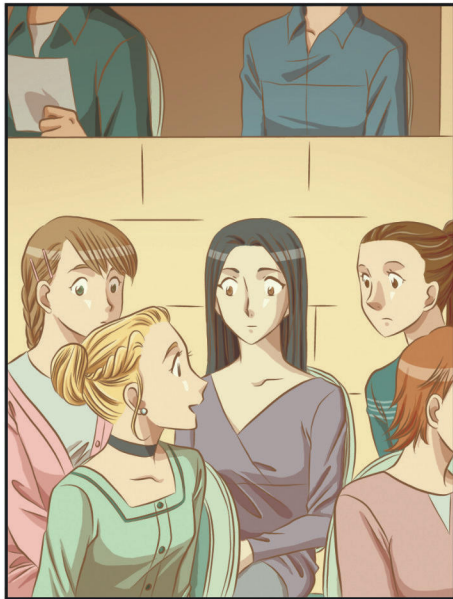
WHAT VARIATION ARE YOU CHOOSING FOR THE AUDITIONS? MRS. IRIS RECOMMENDED I DANCE KITRI, BUT I'M AFRAID OF THE RHYTHM!

I'D LIKE TO DANCE THE PART OF AURORA, BUT I THINK GISELLE'S VARIATION SUITS ME BETTER.

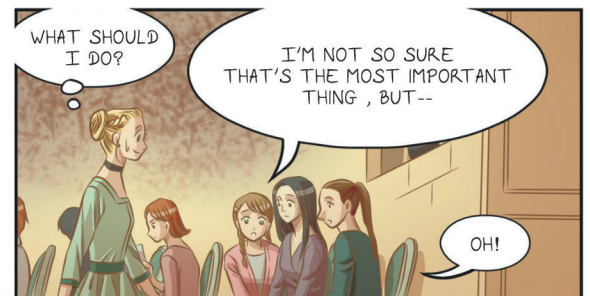
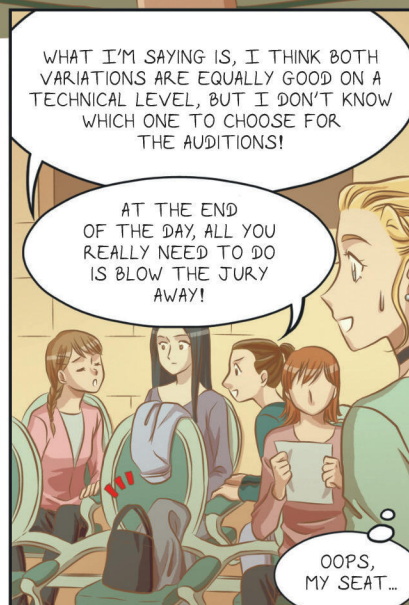
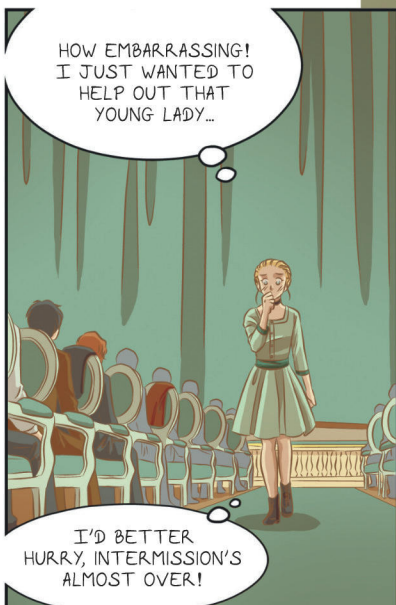
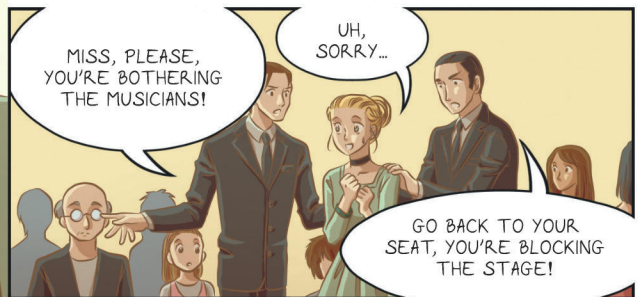
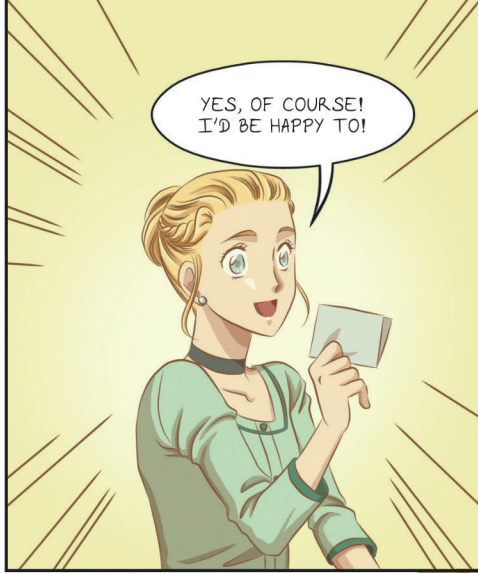


ARE YOU DANCE STUDENTS? ARE YOU AUDITIONING TOO?

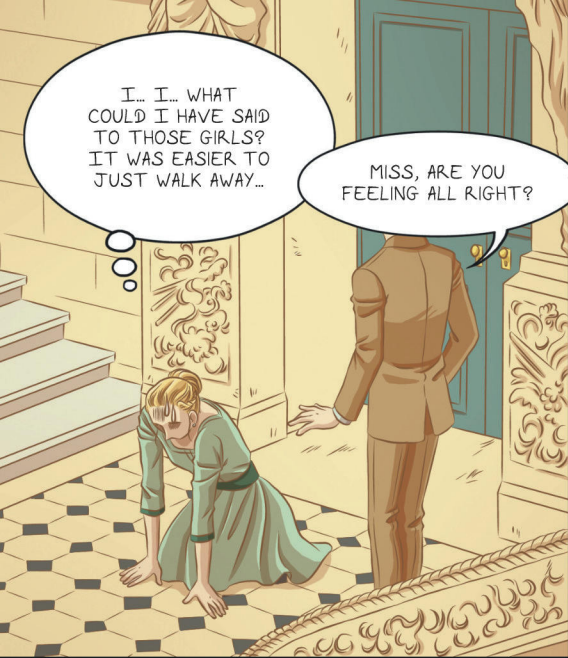






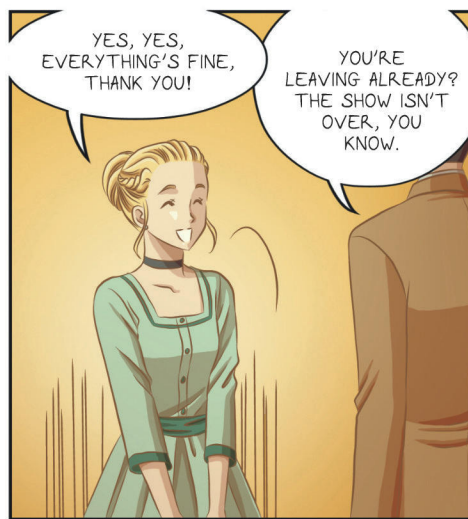






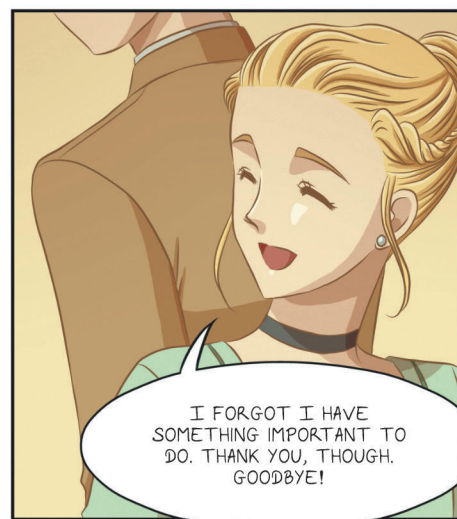
I... I... WHAT  
COULD I HAVE SAID  
TO THOSE GIRLS?  
IT WAS EASIER TO  
JUST WALK AWAY...

MISS, ARE YOU  
FEELING ALL RIGHT?

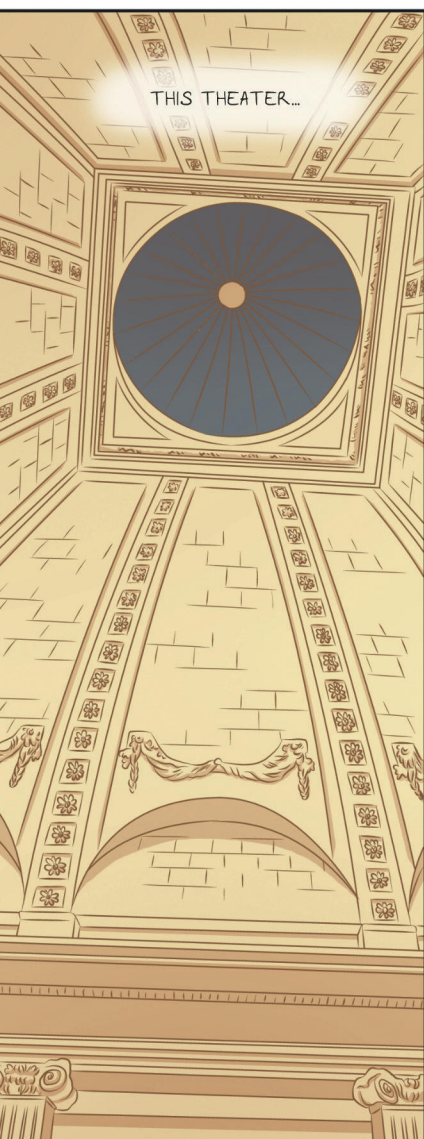


YES, YES,  
EVERYTHING'S FINE,  
THANK YOU!

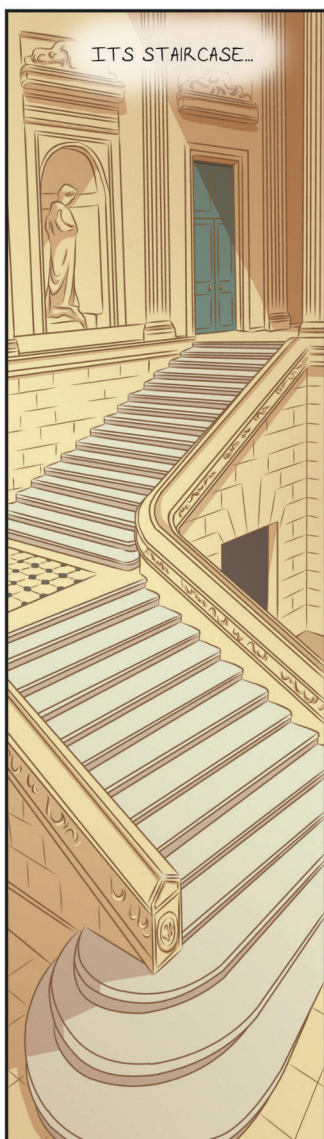
YOU'RE  
LEAVING ALREADY?  
THE SHOW ISN'T  
OVER, YOU  
KNOW.



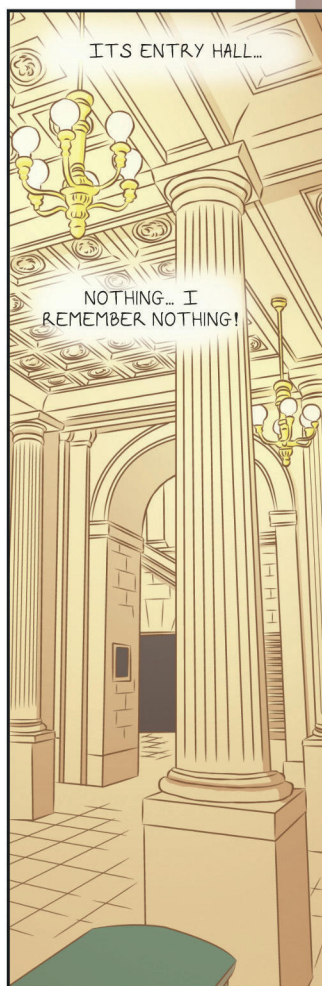
I FORGOT I HAVE  
SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO  
DO. THANK YOU, THOUGH.  
GOODBYE!



THIS THEATER...



ITS STAIRCASE...



ITS ENTRY HALL...

NOTHING... I  
REMEMBER NOTHING!



WHY CAN'T I REMEMBER  
ANYTHING ABOUT MY LIFE? WHY  
HAVE I WOKEN UP A HUNDRED  
YEARS LATER? WHY DO I FEEL  
LIKE A COMPLETE STRANGER  
IN THIS NEW WORLD?



WHAT?! SHE ASKED YOU  
TO TALK TO LUDWIG IN  
THE ORCHESTRA PIT?! HE'S  
IRRITABLE UNDER THE BEST  
OF CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT  
EVERYBODY KNOWS HE'S TEN  
TIMES WORSE JUST BEFORE A  
SHOW! HE'S SUCH A WORKAHOLIC,  
I HEAR HE EVEN PRACTICES  
THROUGH THE NIGHT!

I'M SURE THOSE DANCE CLASS  
BRATS SAW YOU WITH LEONIDE  
BEFOREHAND AND WANTED TO GET  
BACK AT YOU! NEXT TIME, STAND  
UP FOR YOURSELF!

MRS. IRIS'S DANCE CLASS STARTS  
IN THIS STUDIO IN JUST A FEW MINUTES.  
I ACCOMPANY THEM ON THE PIANO. IF YOU  
STAY IN THE HALLWAY, NO ONE  
WILL NOTICE YOU!

YOU'VE GOTTA SHOW  
THEM WHAT YOU'VE GOT! IF YOU  
WANT TO TRY OUT, YOU HAVE  
TO PRACTICE!

YOU CAN HIDE BEHIND  
THIS WALL. PROMISE ME  
YOU'LL FOLLOW ALONG  
WITH THE CLASS  
FROM HERE!

BUT I'M  
NOT PROPERLY  
DRESSED!

I THOUGHT  
OF THAT! HERE!  
DEMI-POINTE  
SHOES!

ARIA, YOU--

IT'S NOTHING! YOU  
SHOULD BE ABLE TO WARM  
UP AND JUMP WITH  
THESE!

THANK YOU, ARIA!  
THAT'S SO KIND!

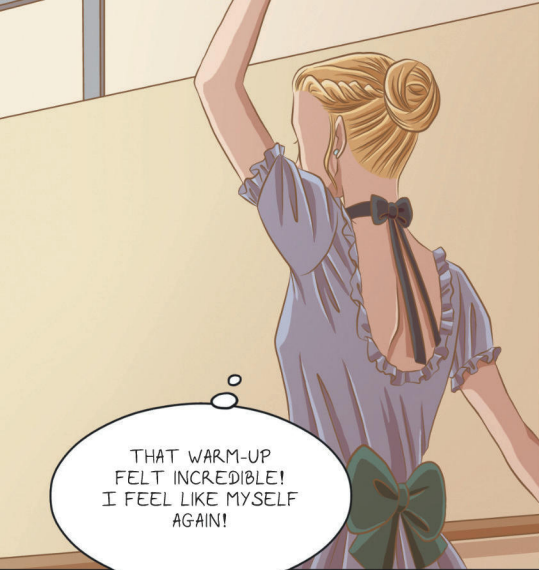
THE STUDENTS HAVE ALL  
ARRIVED... I SEE THE THREE GIRLS  
WHO WERE SITTING BEHIND ME AT  
THE GRAND THEATER...

ARIA, LET'S  
START EASY THIS  
MORNING. SOME OF  
THE GIRLS WERE  
ONSTAGE LAST  
NIGHT.

I DON'T  
HAVE A GREAT  
VIEW FROM HERE,  
BUT I CAN HEAR  
EVERYTHING.  
MRS. IRIS HAS A  
REPUTATION  
FOR BEING  
STRICT...

IT'S BEEN AN  
ETERNITY SINCE I LAST  
DANCED! I CAN'T WAIT  
TO START AGAIN!





THAT WARM-UP  
FELT INCREDIBLE!  
I FEEL LIKE MYSELF  
AGAIN!

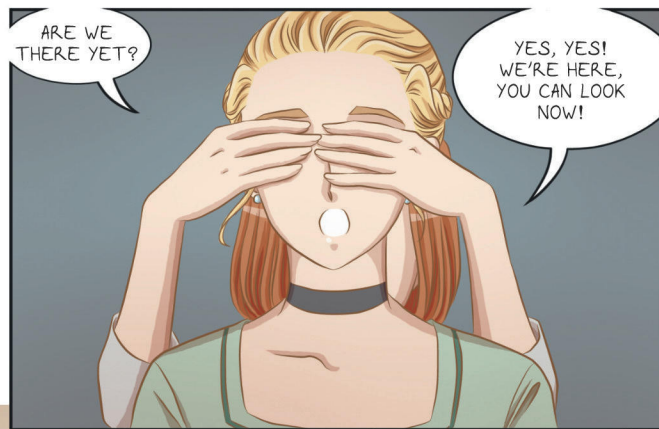


WHERE ARE YOU  
TAKING ME, ARIA?

SHHH!  
JUST FOLLOW  
ALONG! LEONIDE, DON'T  
LET GO OF HER HAND!  
WATCH OUT FOR  
THE STEP!

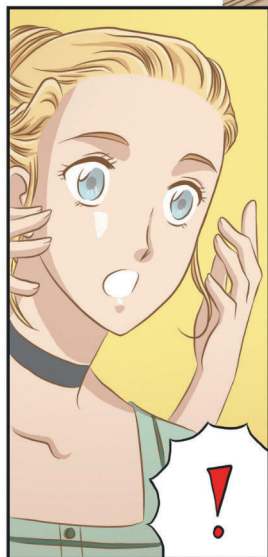
DID YOU GET  
PERMISSION TO LEAVE  
THE ACADEMY?

YES, WE'RE FREE ON  
THE WEEKENDS!



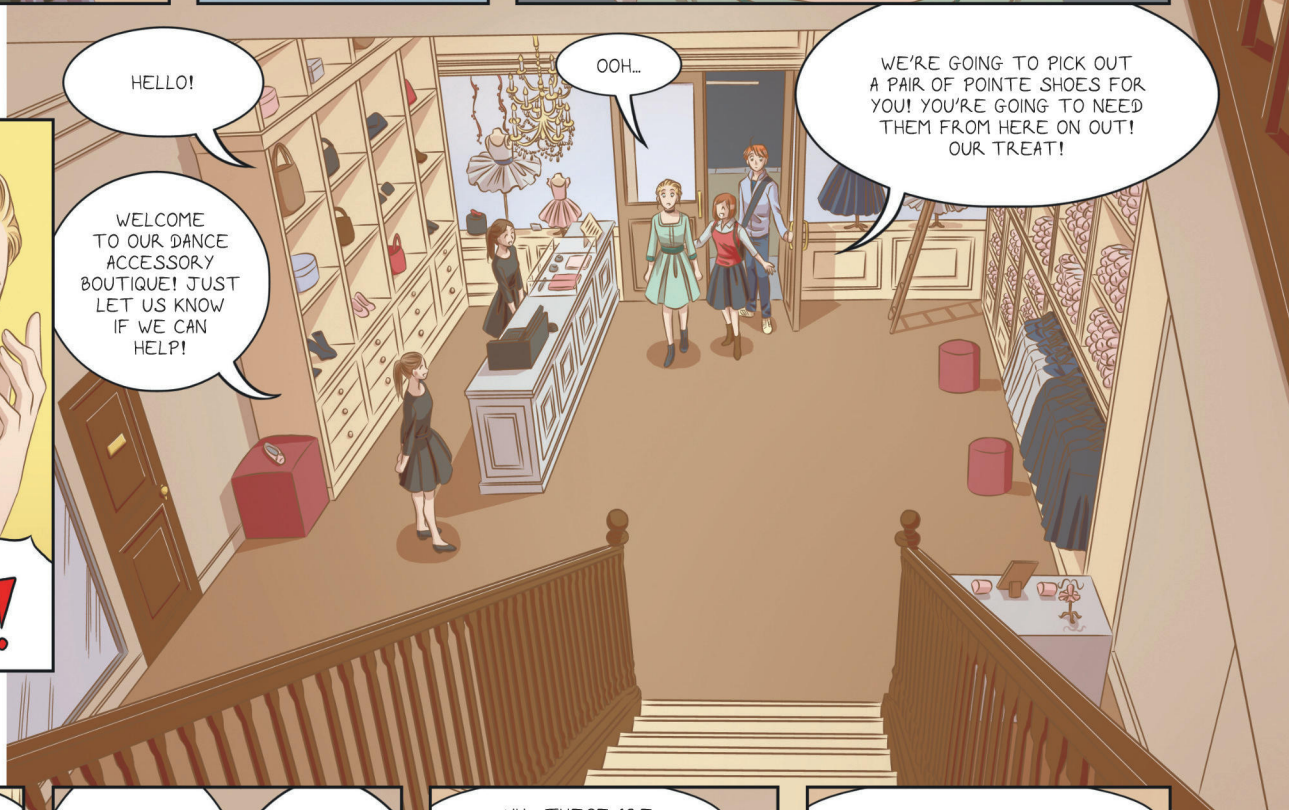
ARE WE  
THERE YET?

YES, YES!  
WE'RE HERE,  
YOU CAN LOOK  
NOW!



HELLO!

WELCOME  
TO OUR DANCE  
ACCESSORY  
BOUTIQUE! JUST  
LET US KNOW  
IF WE CAN  
HELP!



OOH...

WE'RE GOING TO PICK OUT  
A PAIR OF POINTE SHOES FOR  
YOU! YOU'RE GOING TO NEED  
THEM FROM HERE ON OUT!  
OUR TREAT!



HOW MAGNIFICENT!  
WHAT AN IMPRESSIVE  
SELECTION!

WELL NOW... LET'S  
HAVE A LOOK AT YOUR  
FEET, MISS...



HMM... NO,  
THIS WON'T DO.  
YOUR FOOT'S ON  
THE WIDER SIDE,  
BUT YOU HAVE  
A NARROW  
HEEL...

DO YOU  
HAVE WHITE  
DEMI-POINTES  
IN A SIZE 11  
FOR ME?

OF COURSE,  
SIR! I'LL GET  
THEM RIGHT  
AWAY.



UH... THESE ARE  
A LITTLE TIGHT...

LET'S SEE,  
WHAT YOU NEED  
IS--

OH! YOU HAVE  
SHEET MUSIC FOR  
PIANO?!



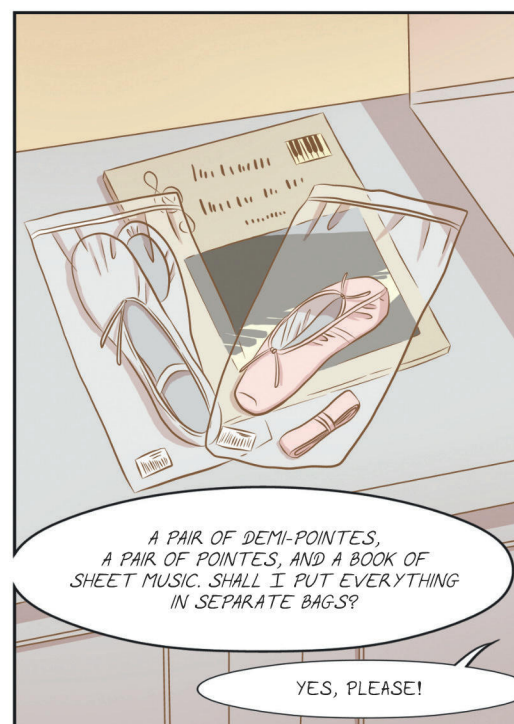
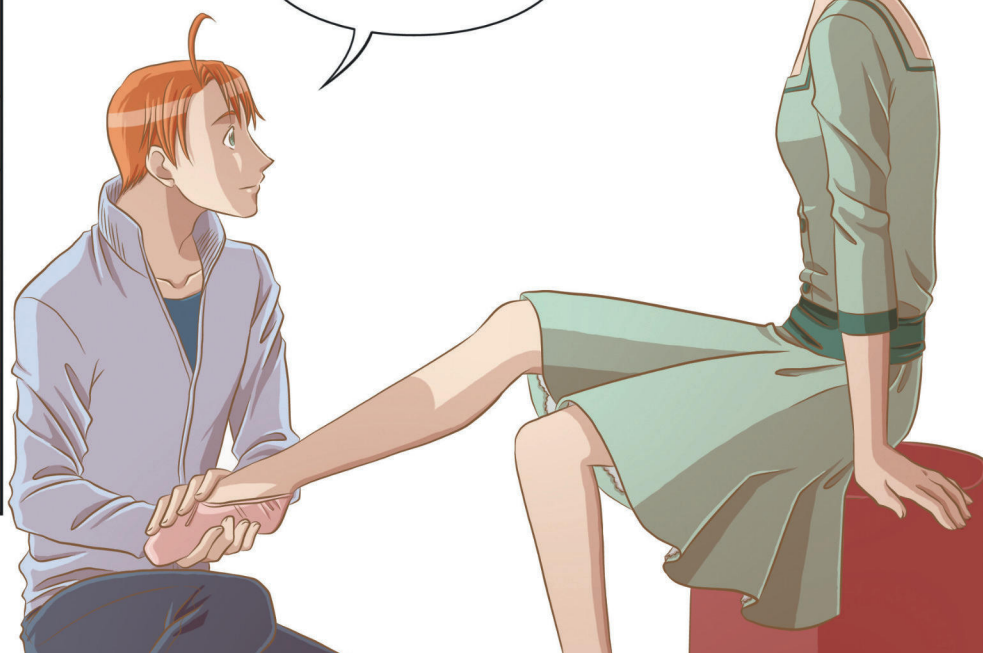
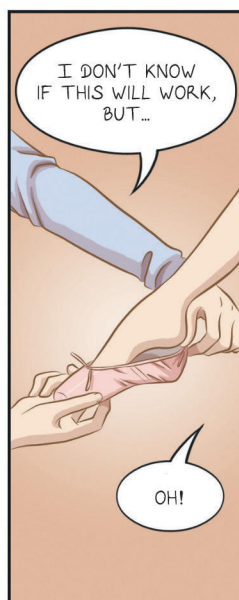
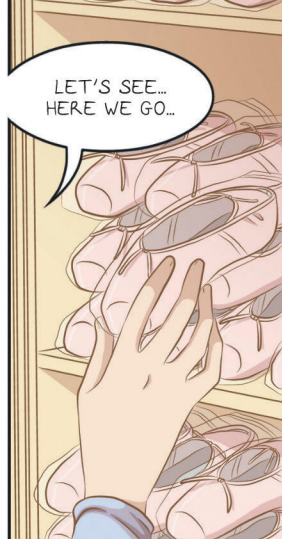
YES, AND WE JUST RECEIVED  
SOME NEW PIECES!

YOU HAVE SOME  
THAT I HAVEN'T  
BEEN ABLE TO FIND  
IN THE ACADEMY  
ARCHIVES.

THIS ONE FEELS  
TOO FLEXIBLE, I COULD  
HURT MYSELF...

WIDE FOOT,  
NARROW HEEL, HARD  
SOLE... IS THAT  
RIGHT?







ARIA, I WAS WONDERING, HAVE YOU AND LEONIDE KNOWN EACH OTHER LONG?

YES, SINCE WE WERE KIDS!

AT THE ACADEMY, STUDENTS HAVE CLASS TOGETHER IN THE MORNINGS. BUT IN THE AFTERNOONS, EVERYONE WORKS ON THEIR ART.

I CHOSE THE PIANO, AND HE'S AN INCREDIBLE DANCER! YOU SHOULD SEE HIM DANCE ONE OF THESE DAYS!

YES... I'D LIKE THAT.

HE'S ALWAYS WORKED HARD AND HE'S MADE HUGE STRIDES LATELY! I'M SURE HE'LL MAKE IT INTO THE COMPANY NO PROBLEM!

THINGS ARE A BIT COMPLICATED WITH HIS FAMILY THOUGH... AND I THINK HE'S LIVING WITH HIS FATHER AGAIN.

DO THEY PUT TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON HIM?

THERE'S THAT... AND THEY'RE VERY WELL OFF, SO HE HAS TO ATTEND A LOT OF BORING SOCIAL EVENTS.

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT MEANS HE HAS TO SPEND TIME WITH THE PERSON WHO DESPISES HIM THE MOST IN THE WORLD...

YOU'RE LATE. YOU MISSED DINNER WITH OUR MOST IMPORTANT PATRONS...

IF YOU PLAN ON LIVING HERE AGAIN, YOU'D BETTER GET WITH THE PROGRAM.

MOTHER WAS FURIOUS. GOD KNOWS HOW SHE STILL MANAGES TO TOLERATE YOU!

WHAT?! LEONIDE AND LUDWIG ARE HALF-BROTHERS?!

YES, BUT THEY'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO STAND ONE ANOTHER... THAT'S WHY THEY OPTED FOR DORM ROOMS, ALTHOUGH LUDWIG SPENDS A LOT MORE TIME AT THE FAMILY MANOR.

SORRY, I HAD MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO TONIGHT...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHY GRANDFATHER HASN'T CUT YOU OUT OF HIS WILL YET.

YOU'LL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING. YOU'LL ALWAYS BE THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE FAMILY!

I KNOW! YOU'VE BEEN TELLING ME THAT SINCE YOU LEARNED TO TALK, REMEMBER?

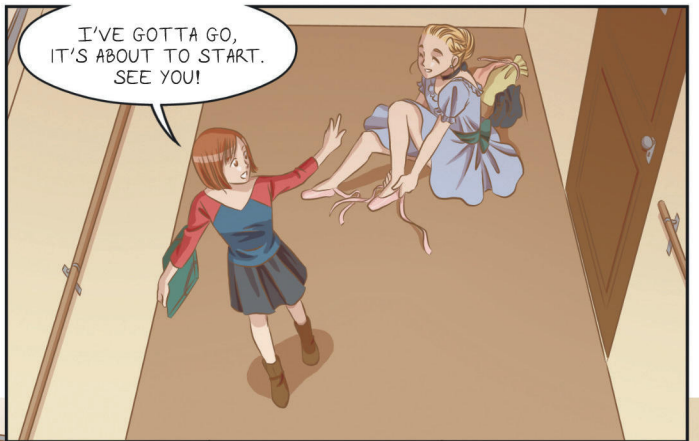
FATHER AND MOTHER ARE WAITING FOR YOU IN THE STUDY, AND IT'S NOT FOR A ROUND OF CARDS...



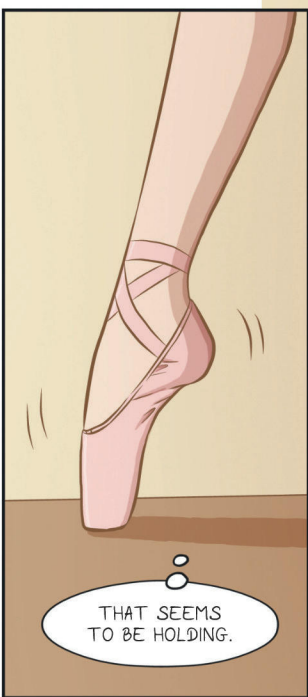


I CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK ON POINTE! IT'S A GOOD THING YOU AND LEONIDE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT ME!

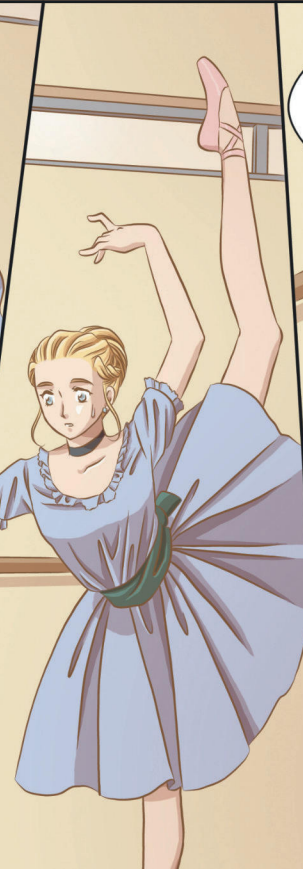
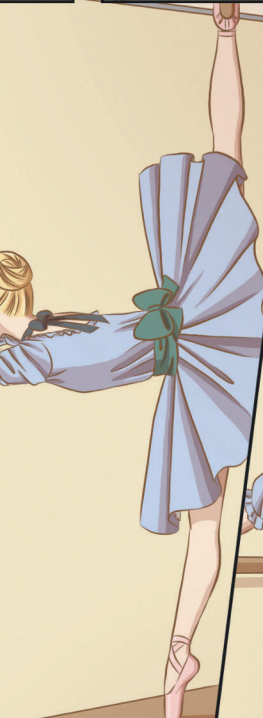
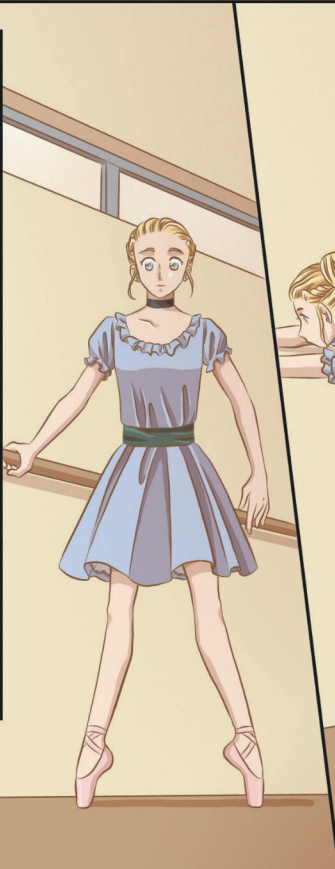
I WISH I COULD SEE YOU DANCE!



I'VE GOTTA GO, IT'S ABOUT TO START. SEE YOU!



THAT SEEMS TO BE HOLDING.



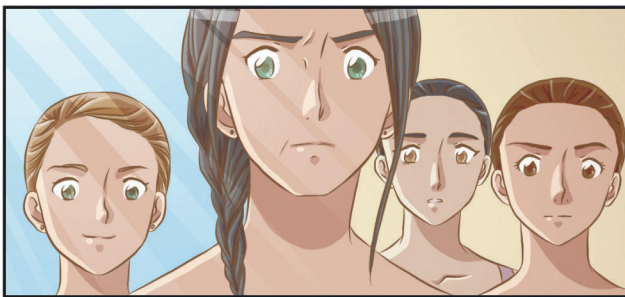
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHEN DID THE MUSIC STOP?



SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT AN INTRUDER WAS SECRETLY TAKING MY CLASS, BUT I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, YOUNG LADY? HOW DID YOU GET IN? WHO ALLOWED YOU TO ENTER THESE PREMISES?

SO-SORRY! IT'S MY FAULT, I...



SOMEONE RATTED HER OUT!

I'M WAITING, YOUNG LADY.

WHAT CAN I SAY? I DON'T WANT TO GET ARIA IN TROUBLE!

I...

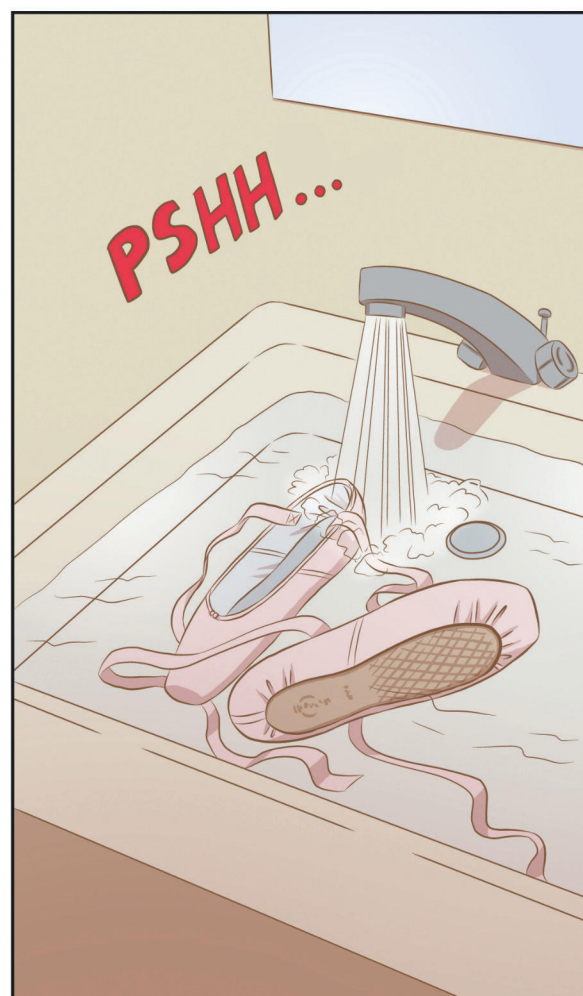
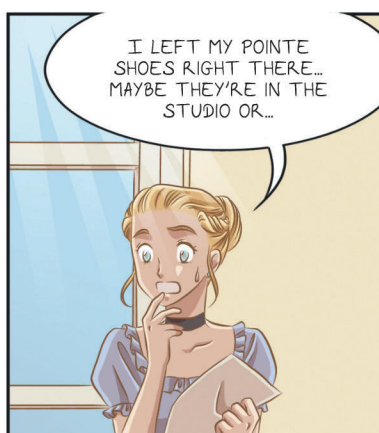
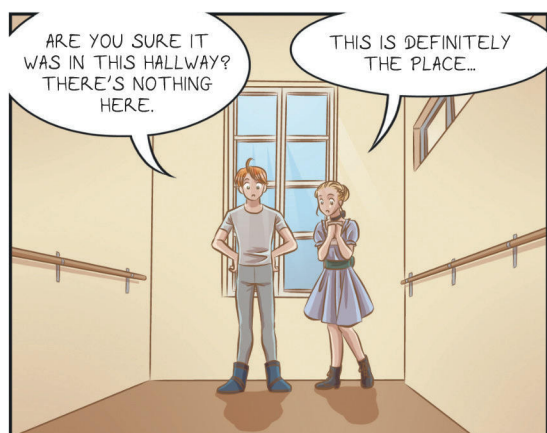
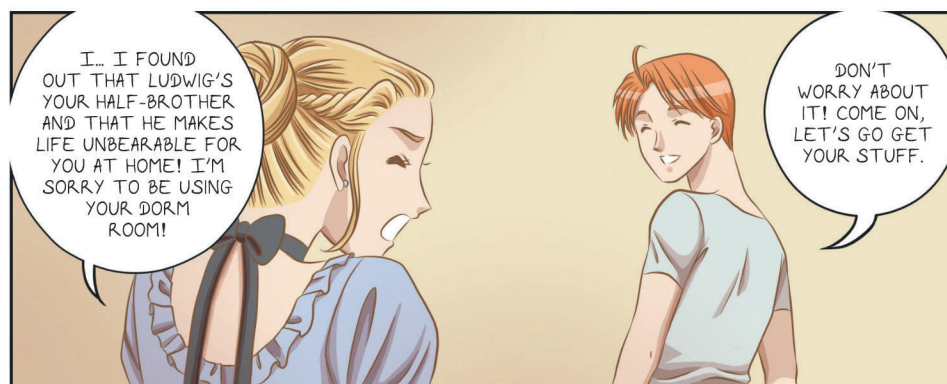
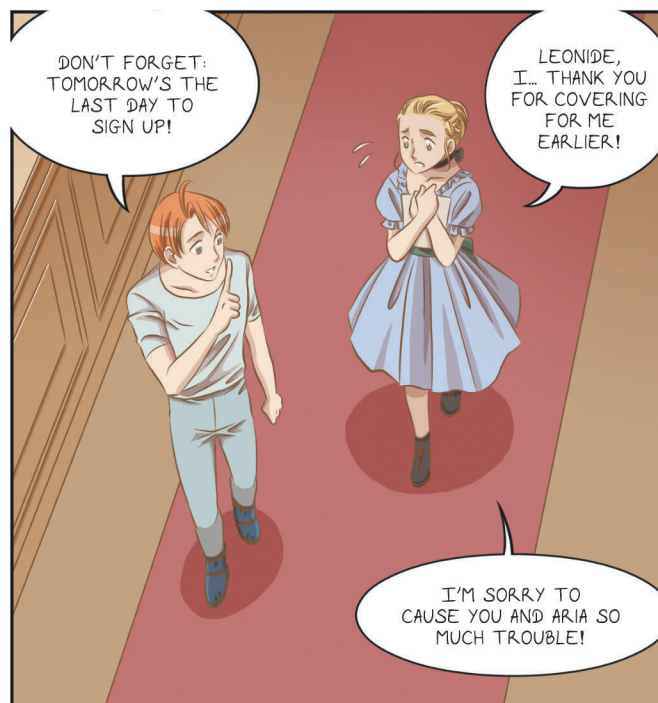
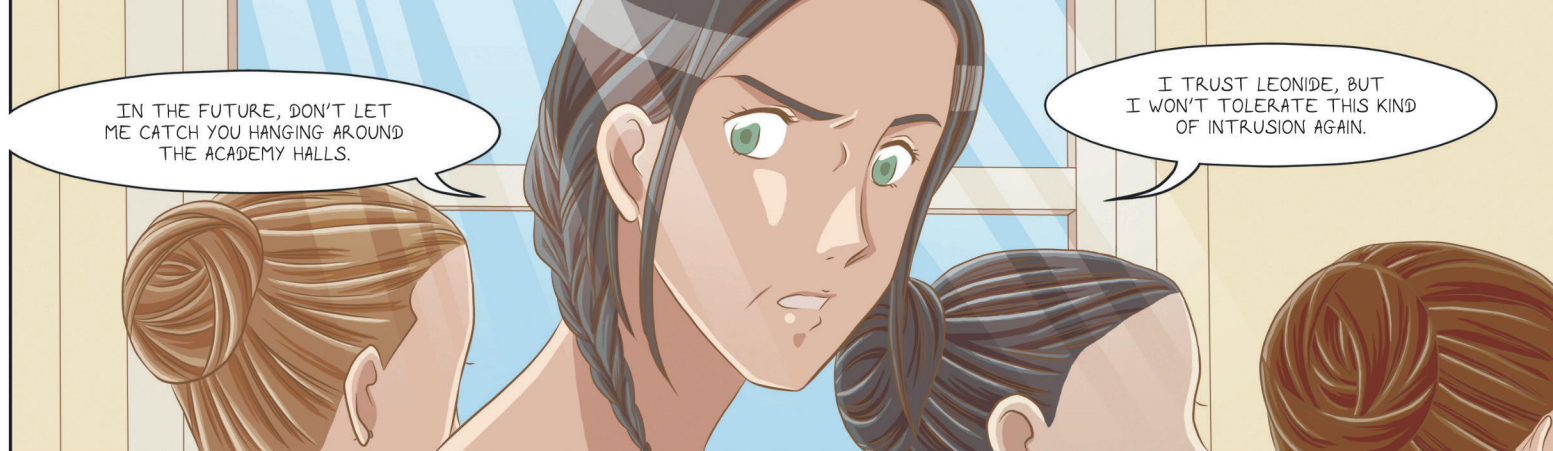
I'M SORRY. I'M THE ONE WHO LET HER INTO THE BUILDING, MRS. IRIS...

LEONIDE, BUT...

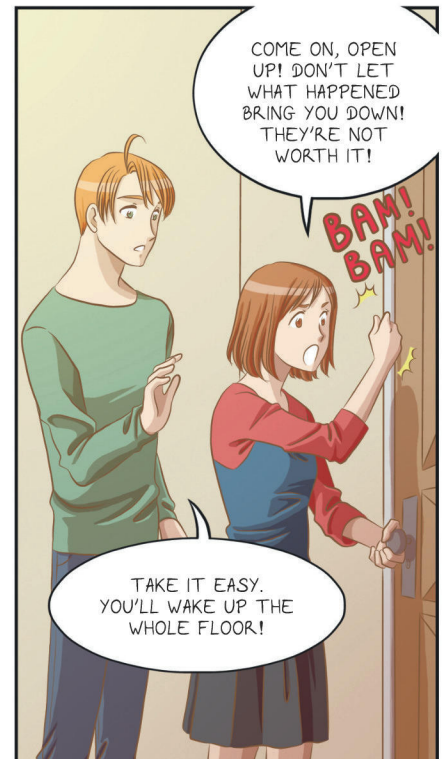
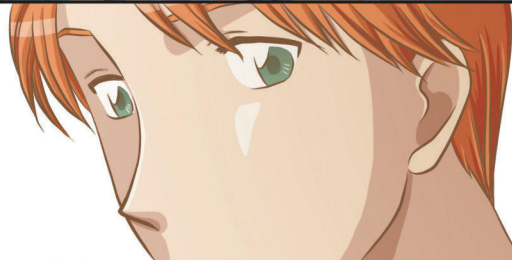
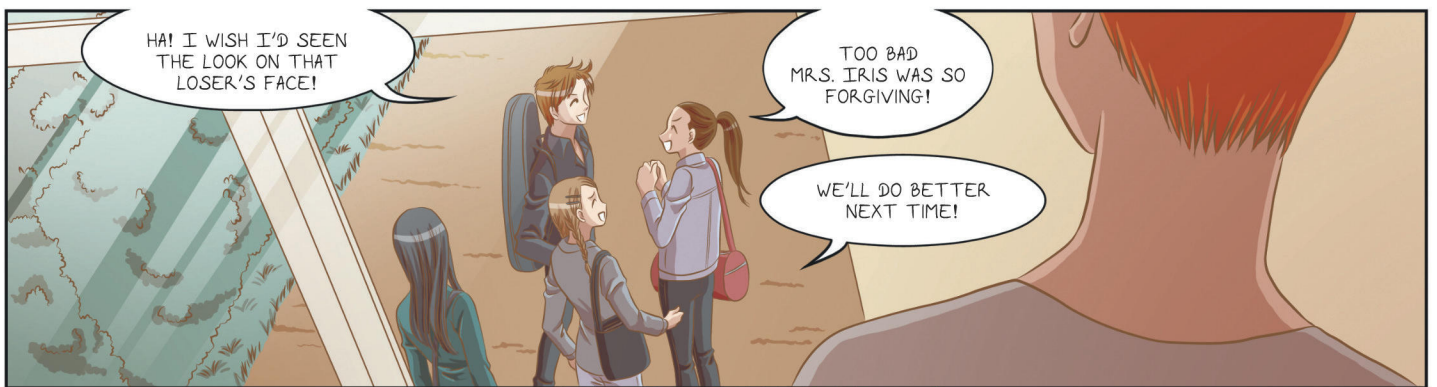
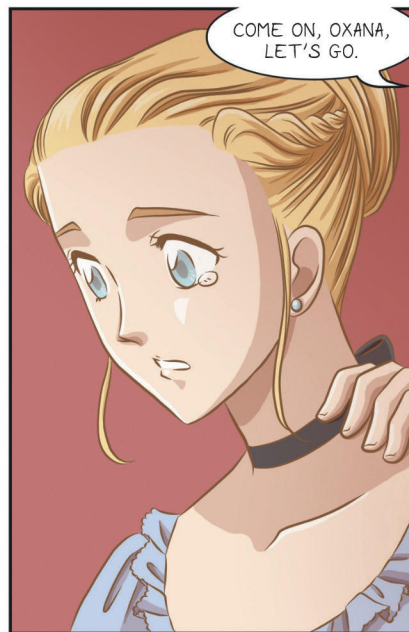
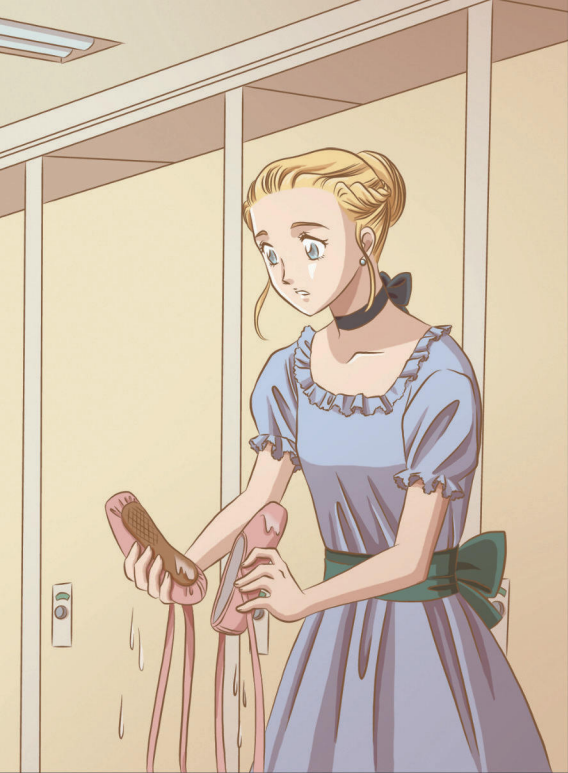
WHY COULDN'T SHE TELL ME THAT HERSELF?

I WAS TAKING HER TO SIGN UP FOR THE AUDITIONS, BUT SHE GOT A LITTLE INTIMIDATED.

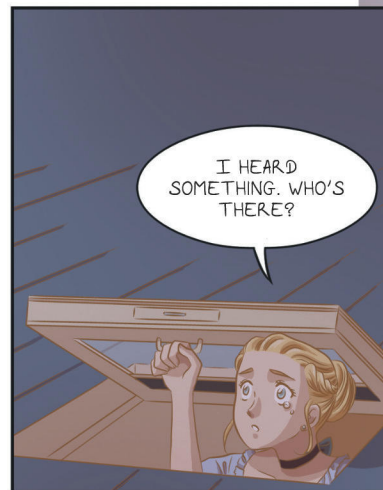
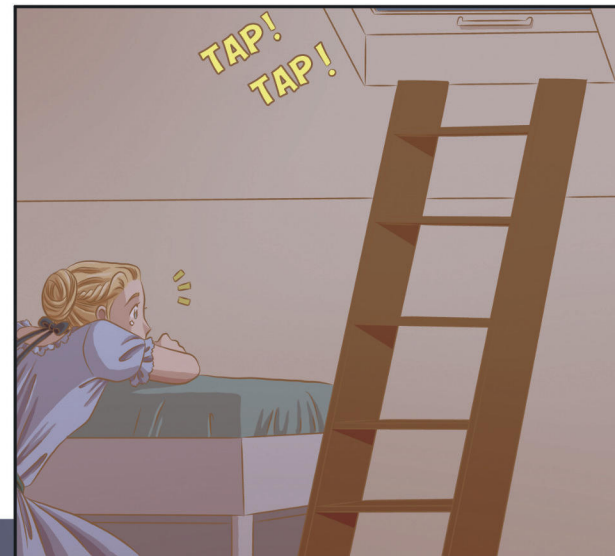
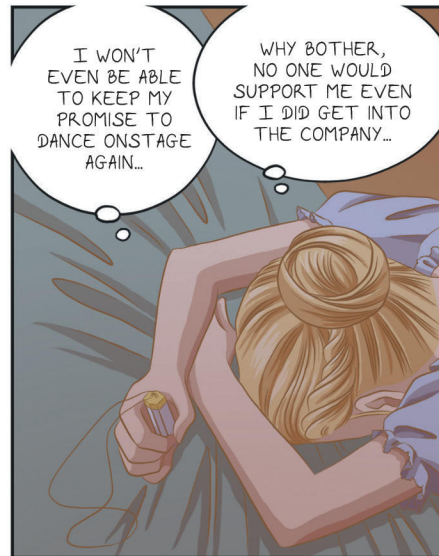
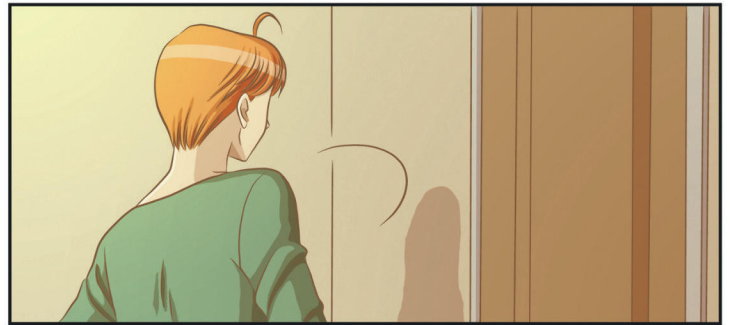
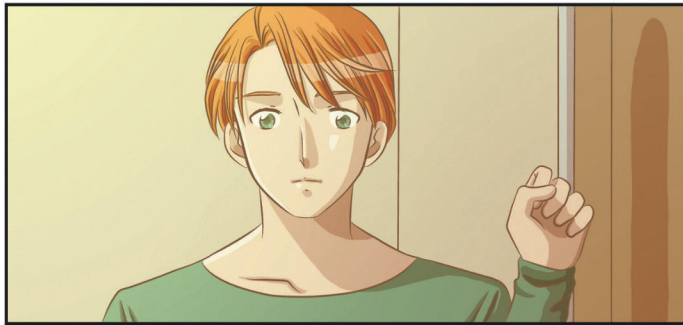
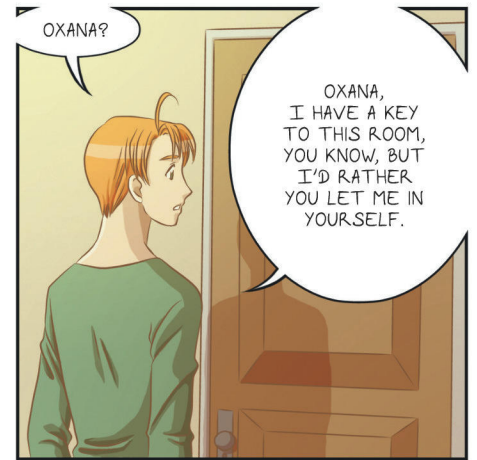
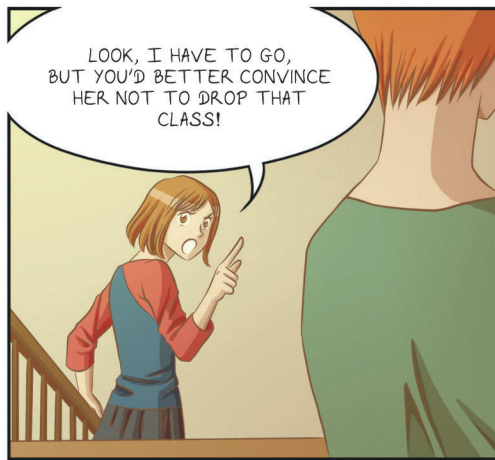




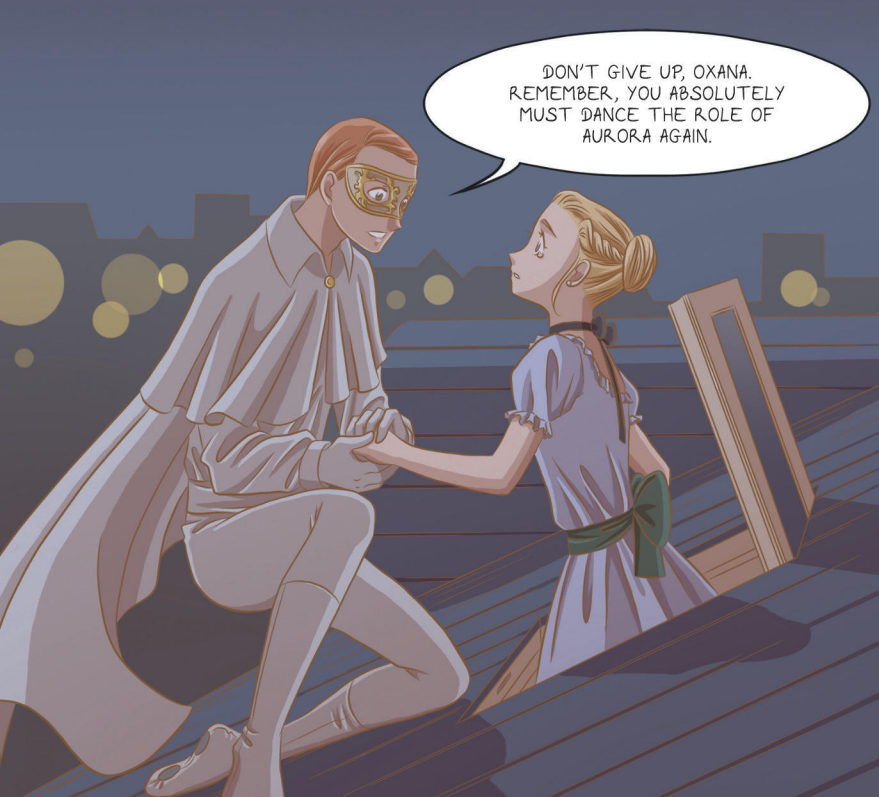












DON'T GIVE UP, OXANA. REMEMBER, YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST DANCE THE ROLE OF AURORA AGAIN.



I CAN'T! I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I'M REALLY OXANA RAVENEL! YOU'RE THE ONE INSISTING THAT'S WHO I AM. I'M NOT EVEN BRAVE ENOUGH TO AUDITION NOW.



IF YOU DON'T, WHAT'S LEFT FOR YOU?



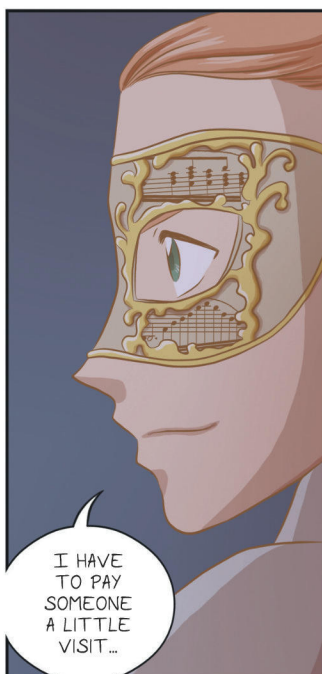
TRUE... ASIDE FROM DANCING, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO ANYTHING ELSE...



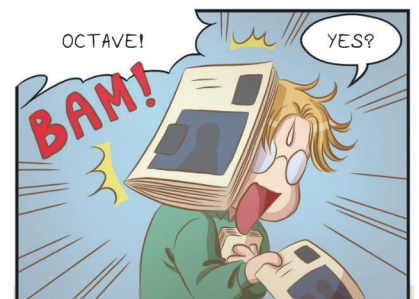
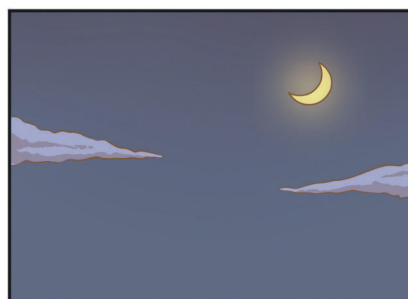
I PROMISE! I'LL STOP COMPLAINING AND I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO DANCE AGAIN!



I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT. I BELIEVE IN YOU, OXANA. I KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE IT, BUT I HAVE TO GO NOW...



I HAVE TO PAY SOMEONE A LITTLE VISIT...



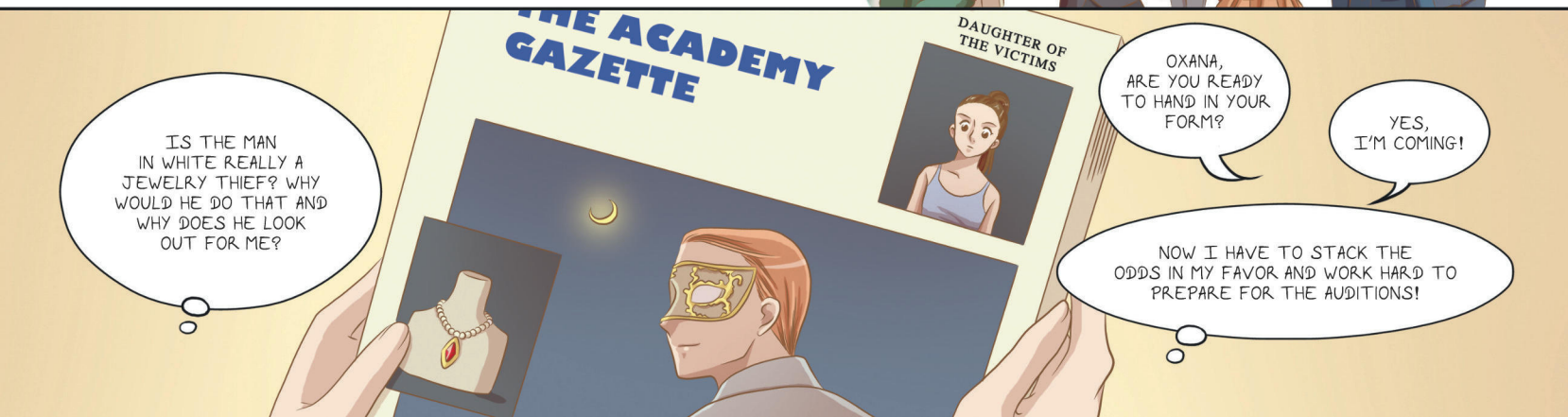
OCTAVE!

YES?

THE MAN IN WHITE BROKE INTO MY PARENTS' HOUSE AND STOLE ONE OF THEIR MOST VALUABLE PIECES OF JEWELRY! HOW IS IT THAT YOU'RE SO WELL-INFORMED?! I BET YOU KNOW WHO IT IS! TELL ME! HE'LL PAY FOR THIS!



NO, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING...



IS THE MAN IN WHITE REALLY A JEWELRY THIEF? WHY WOULD HE DO THAT AND WHY DOES HE LOOK OUT FOR ME?

DAUGHTER OF THE VICTIMS

OXANA, ARE YOU READY TO HAND IN YOUR FORM?

YES, I'M COMING!

NOW I HAVE TO STACK THE ODDS IN MY FAVOR AND WORK HARD TO PREPARE FOR THE AUDITIONS!





PLEASE, MRS. IRIS...



TRAIN  
ME FOR THE  
AUDITIONS!



I'LL DO  
ANYTHING YOU  
SAY...



YOU DON'T NEED TO BEG,  
LEONIDE ALREADY SPOKE TO  
ME ABOUT YOU.

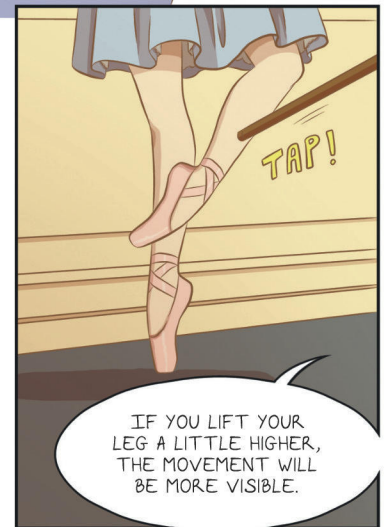
WHAT CAN YOU DO  
FOR ME IN EXCHANGE  
FOR MY HELP?



I'M PRETTY  
SURE I CAN COOK  
AND CLEAN! ARIA  
TAUGHT ME HOW  
TO USE A VACUUM!

IS THAT THE VACUUM  
FROM MY BUILDING? YOU  
BROUGHT IT HERE?

FINE.  
IT'S A  
DEAL.

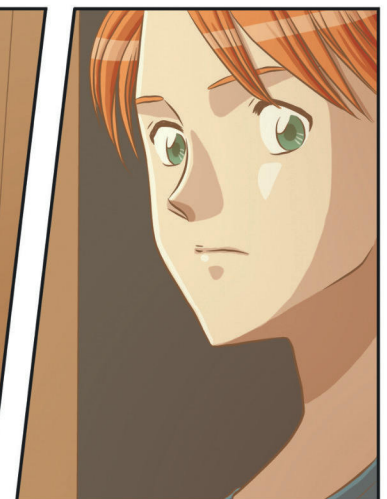


TAP!

IF YOU LIFT YOUR  
LEG A LITTLE HIGHER,  
THE MOVEMENT WILL  
BE MORE VISIBLE.



LISTEN TO THE MUSIC,  
YOU'VE FALLEN BEHIND THE RHYTHM,  
AND DON'T FORGET TO SMILE,  
EVEN IF YOU'RE IN PAIN!



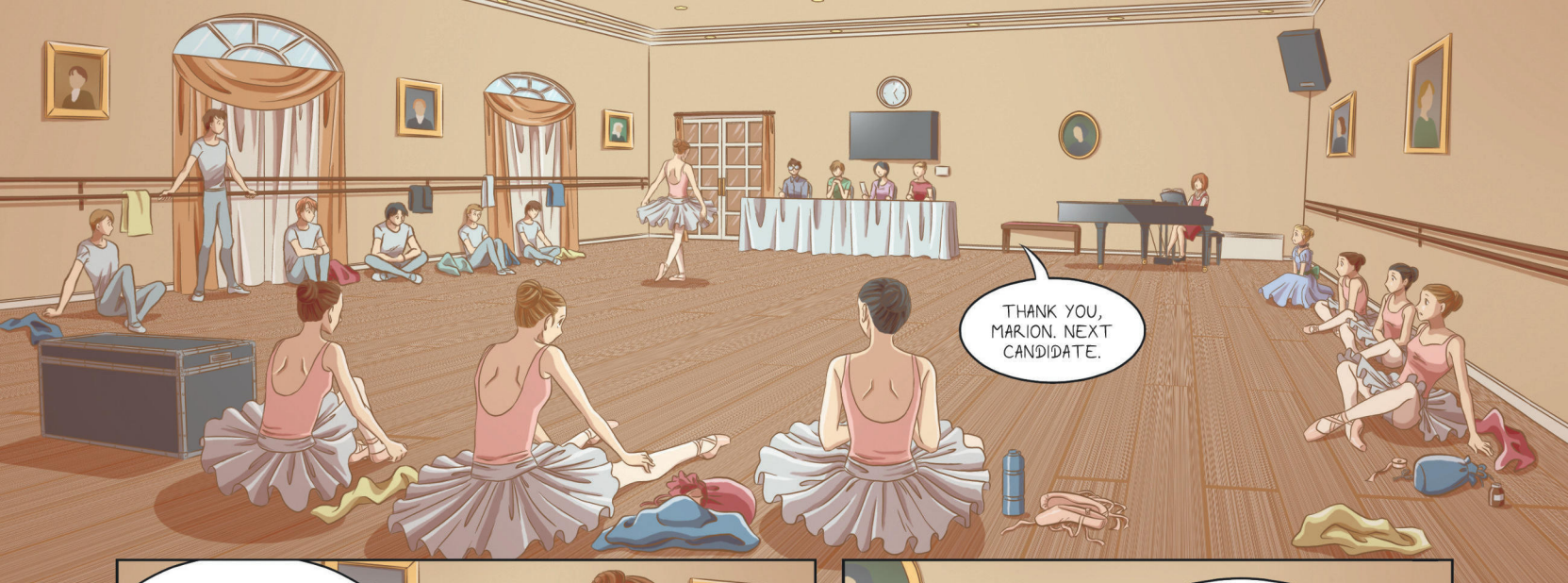
THE BIG DAY IS FINALLY HERE,  
OXANA! DON'T WORRY. WE'RE RIGHT  
HERE WITH YOU!

THANK YOU,  
ARIA. I HATE  
GOING LAST...

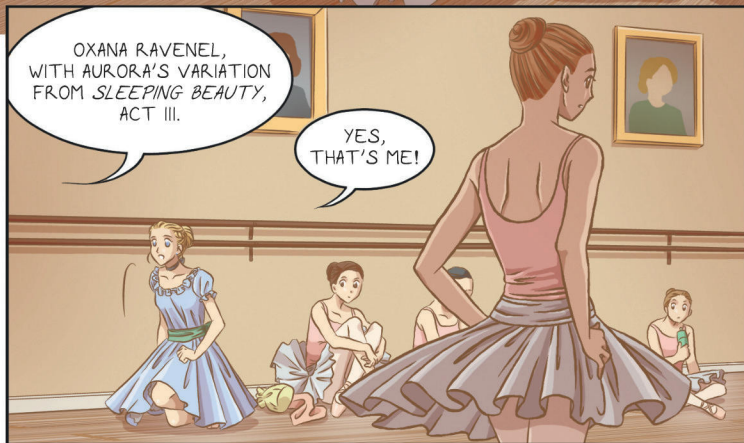


BALLET  
CORPS  
AUDITIONS



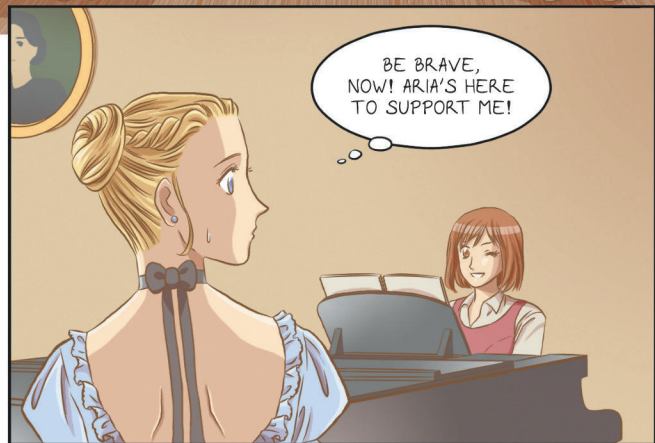


THANK YOU, MARION. NEXT CANDIDATE.

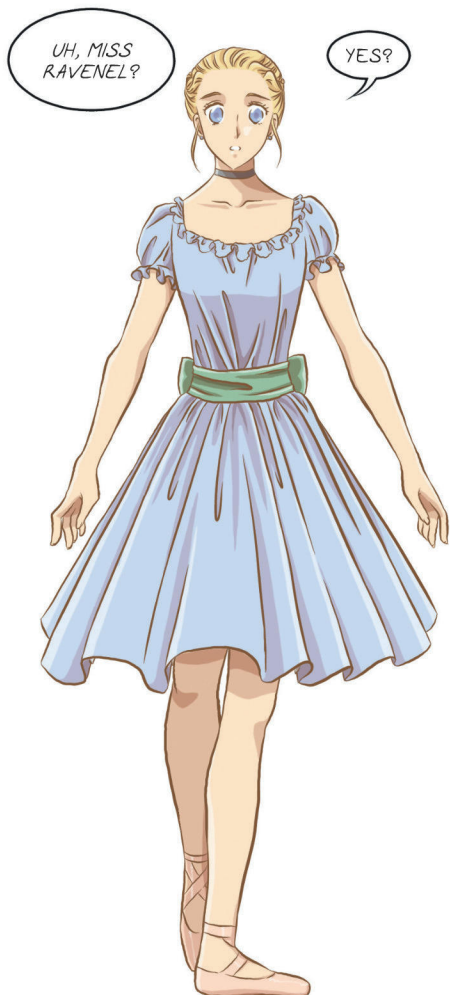


OXANA RAVENEL, WITH AURORA'S VARIATION FROM SLEEPING BEAUTY, ACT III.

YES, THAT'S ME!

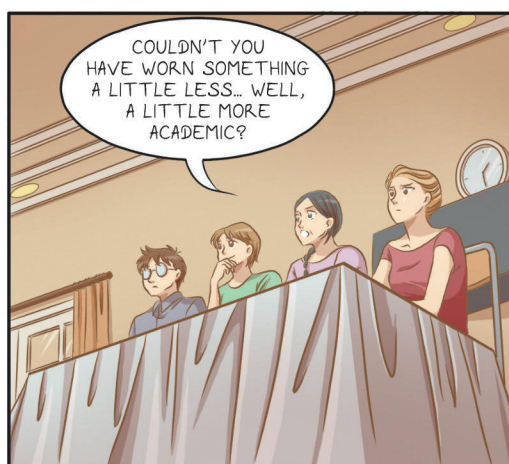


BE BRAVE, NOW! ARIA'S HERE TO SUPPORT ME!

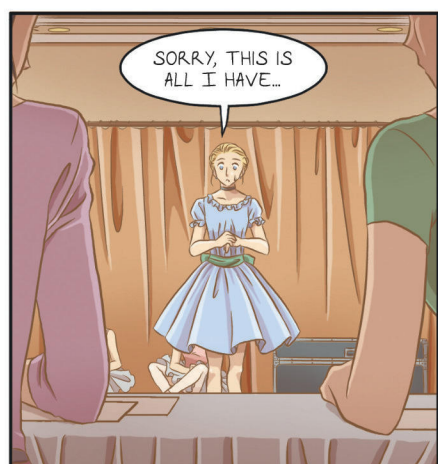


UH, MISS RAVENEL?

YES?



COULDN'T YOU HAVE WORN SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS... WELL, A LITTLE MORE ACADEMIC?



SORRY, THIS IS ALL I HAVE...

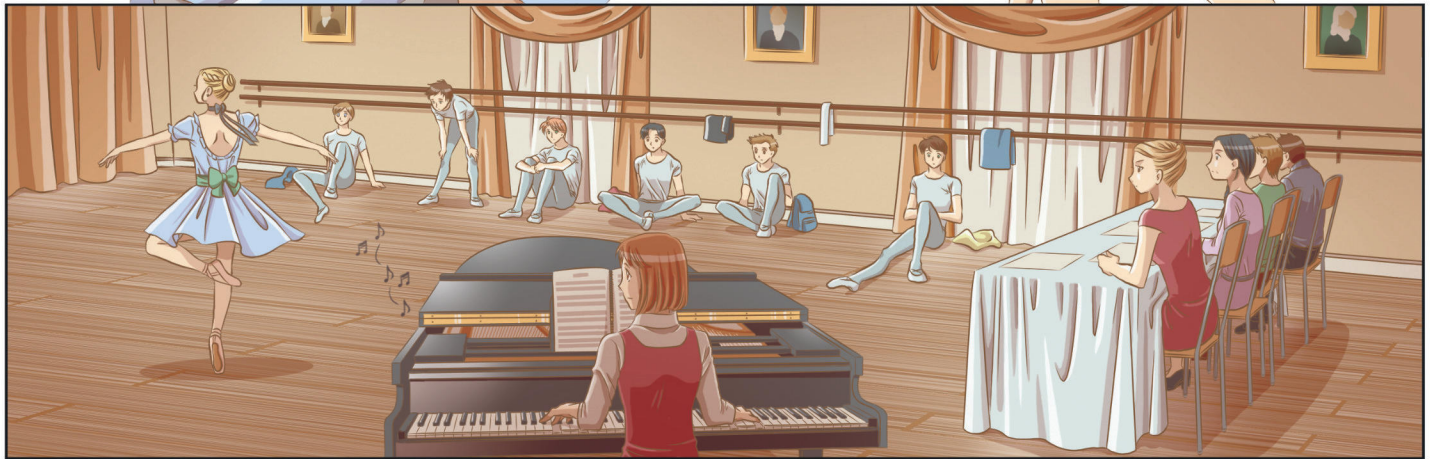


NEVER MIND! ARIA, PLEASE BEGIN!

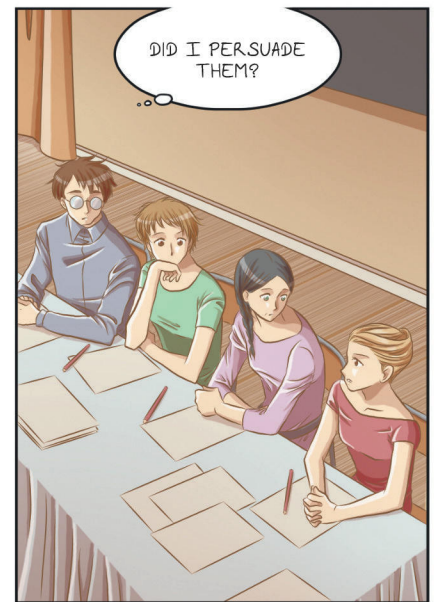
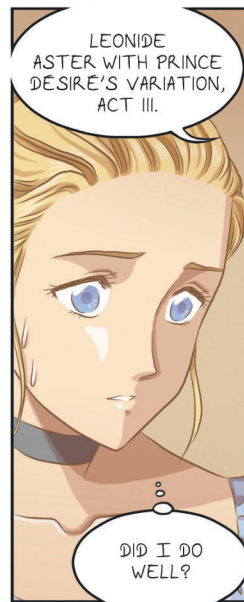


COME ON, OXANA!

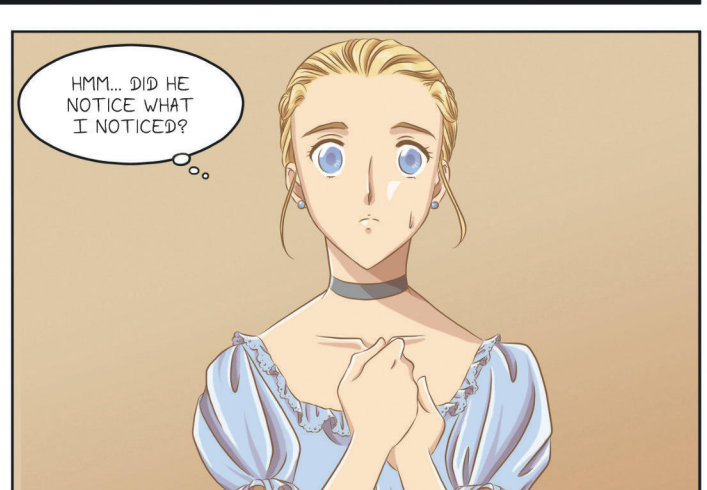
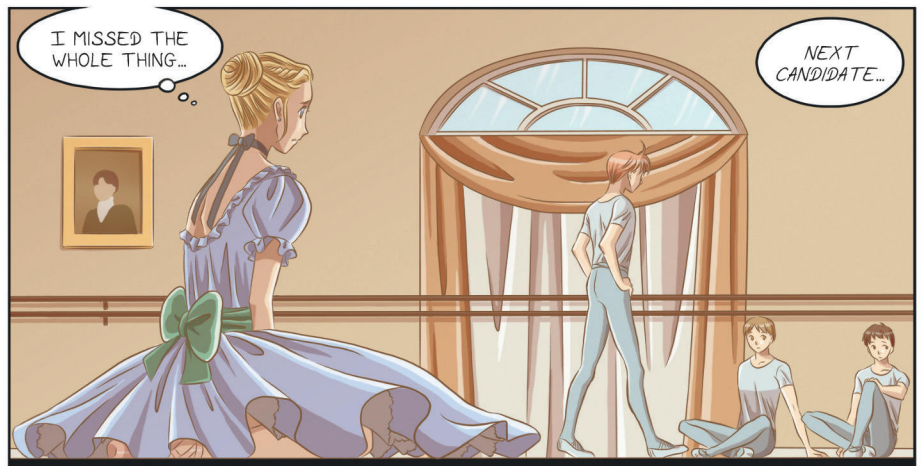
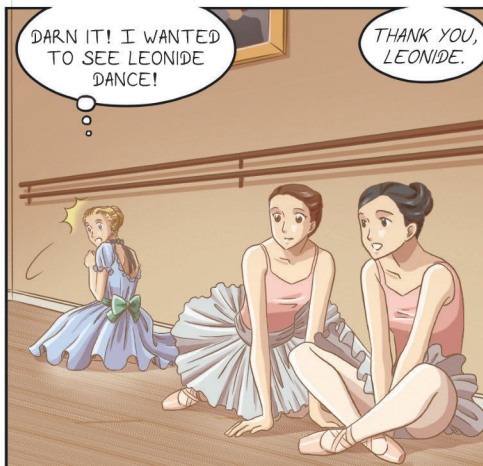
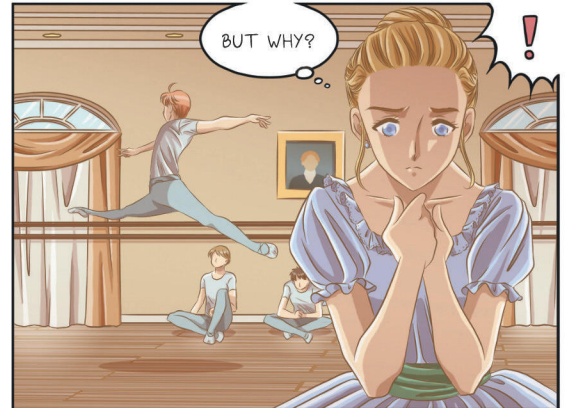
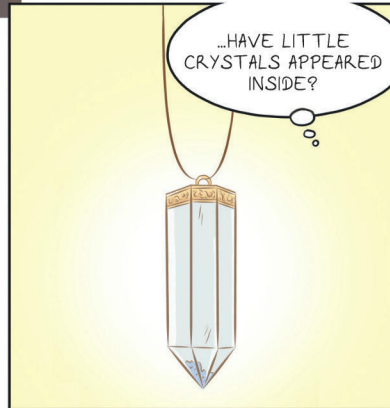
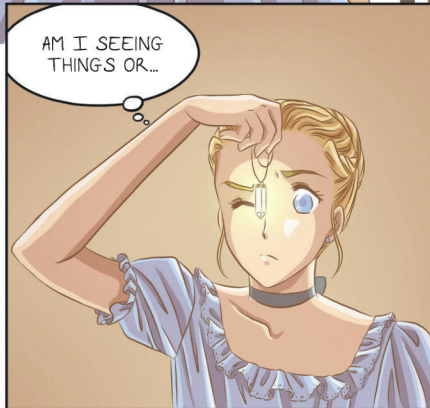
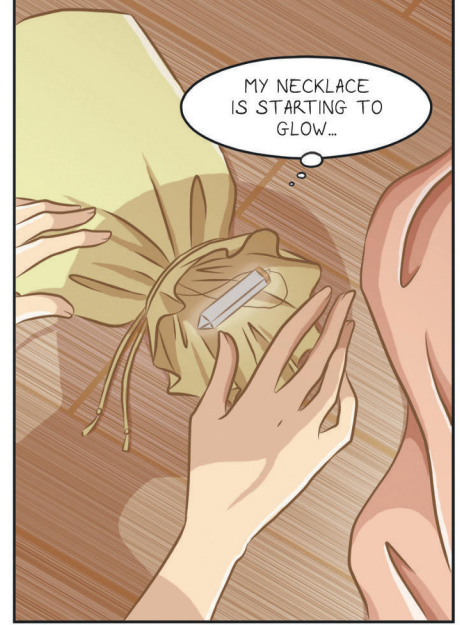
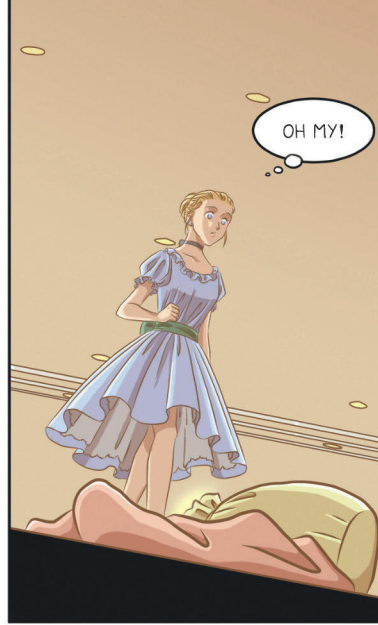
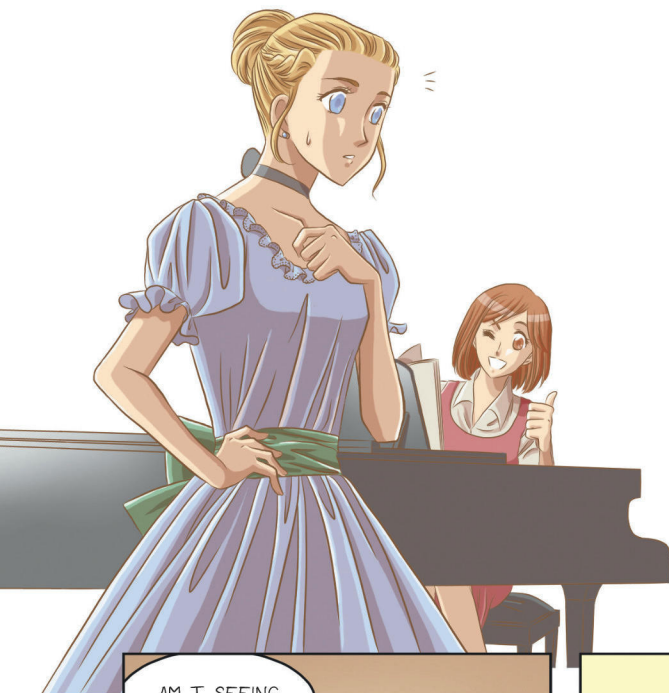




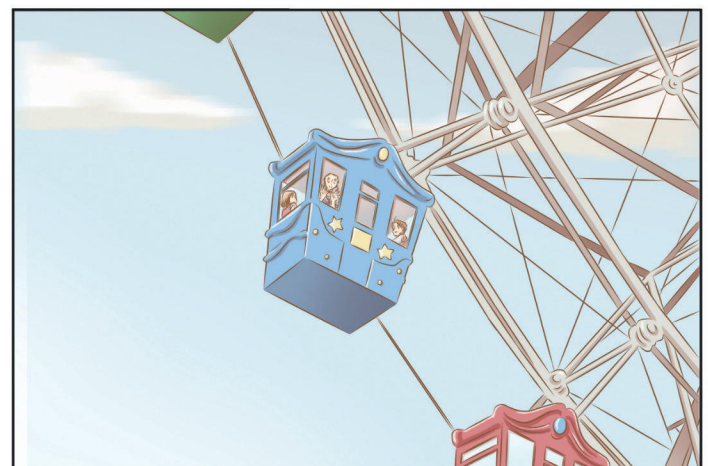
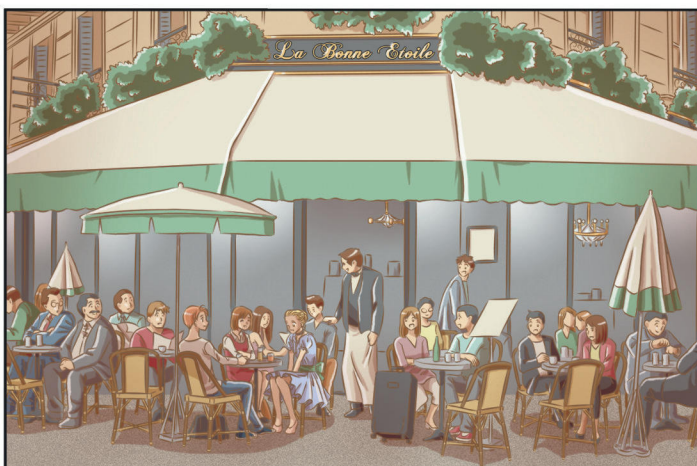
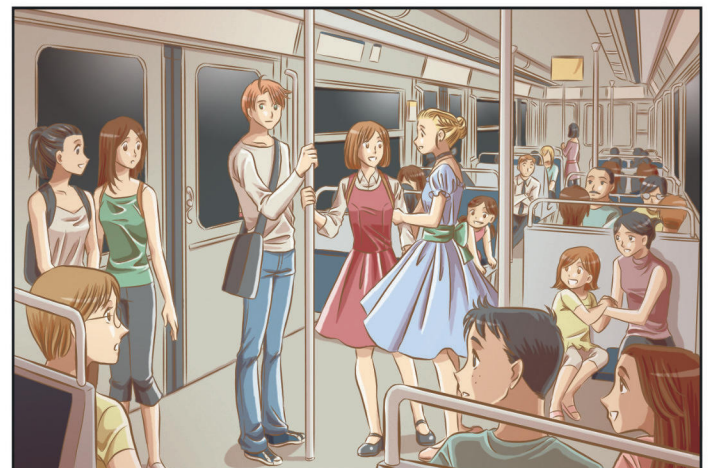
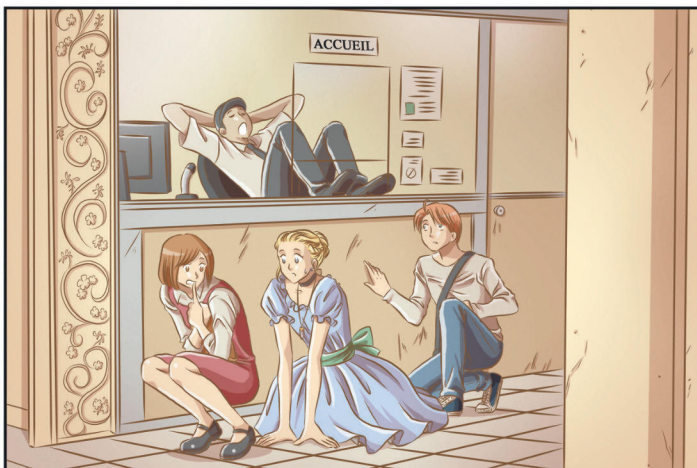
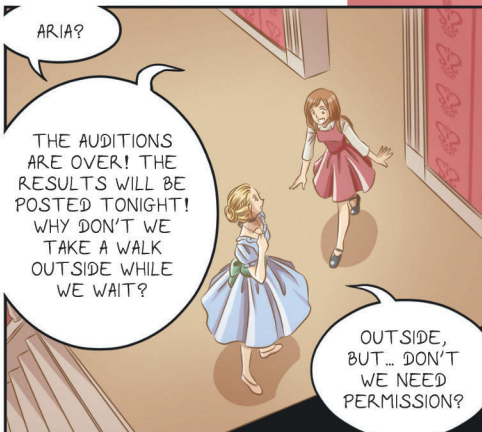
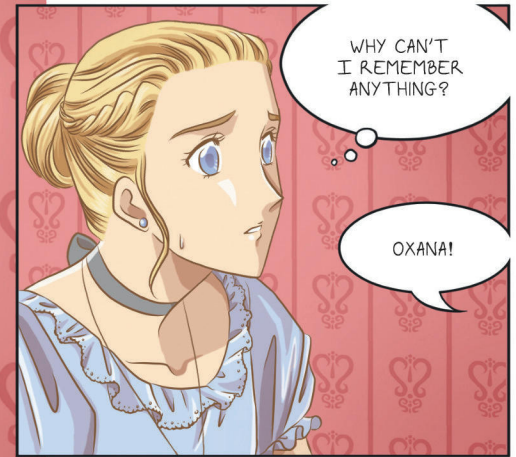
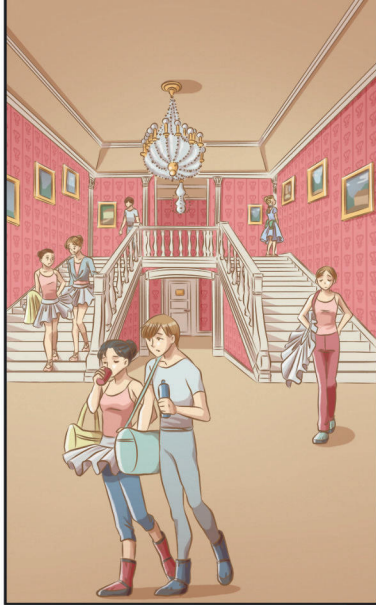
THANK YOU.  
LET'S MOVE ON TO  
THE BOYS NOW. NEXT  
CANDIDATE...



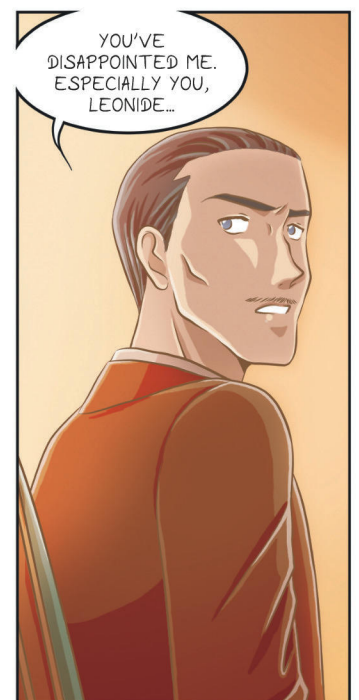
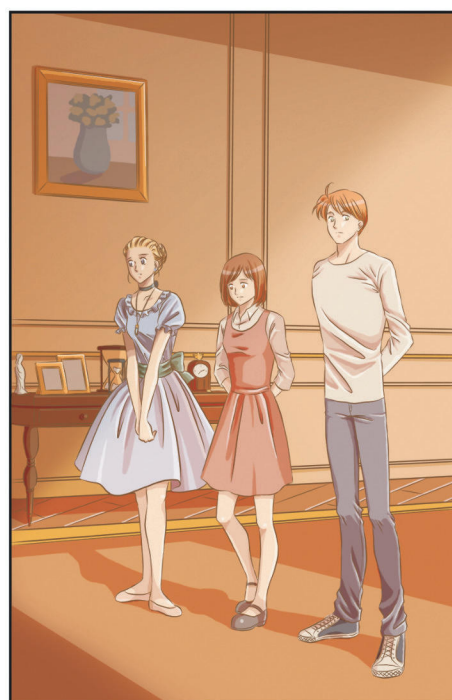
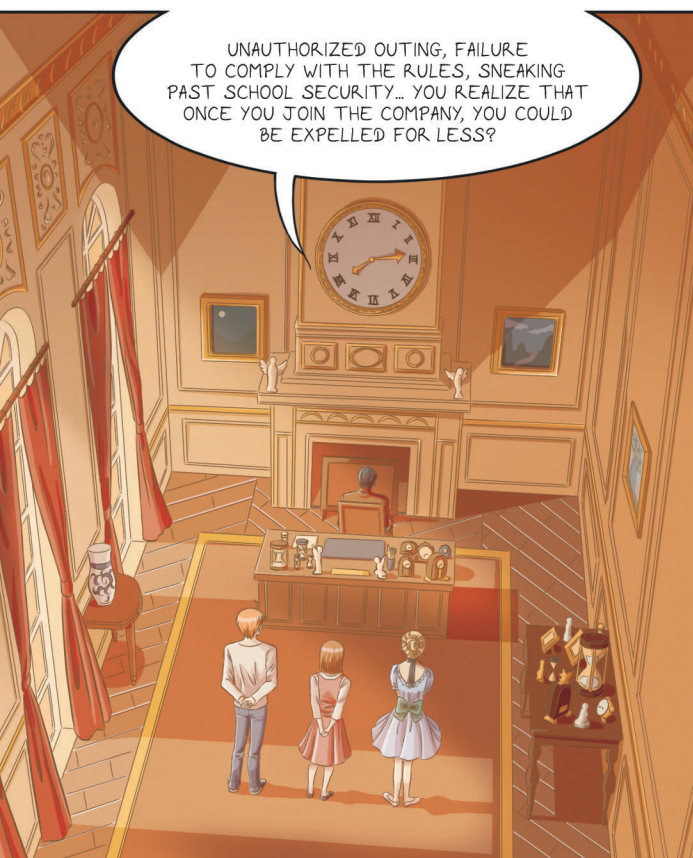
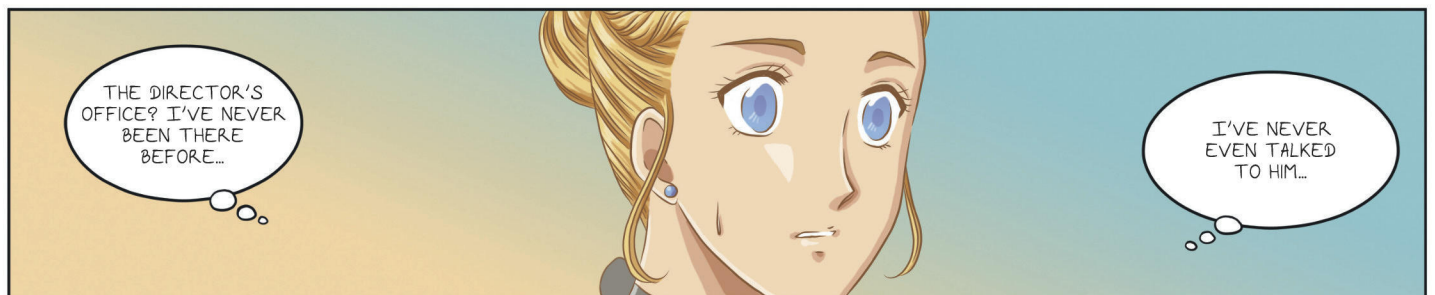
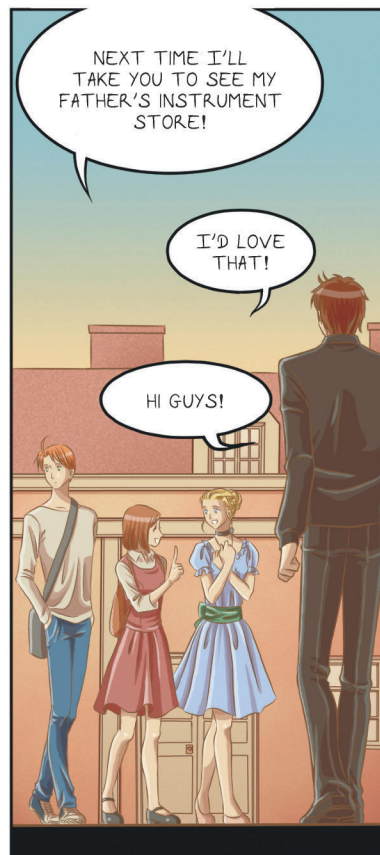
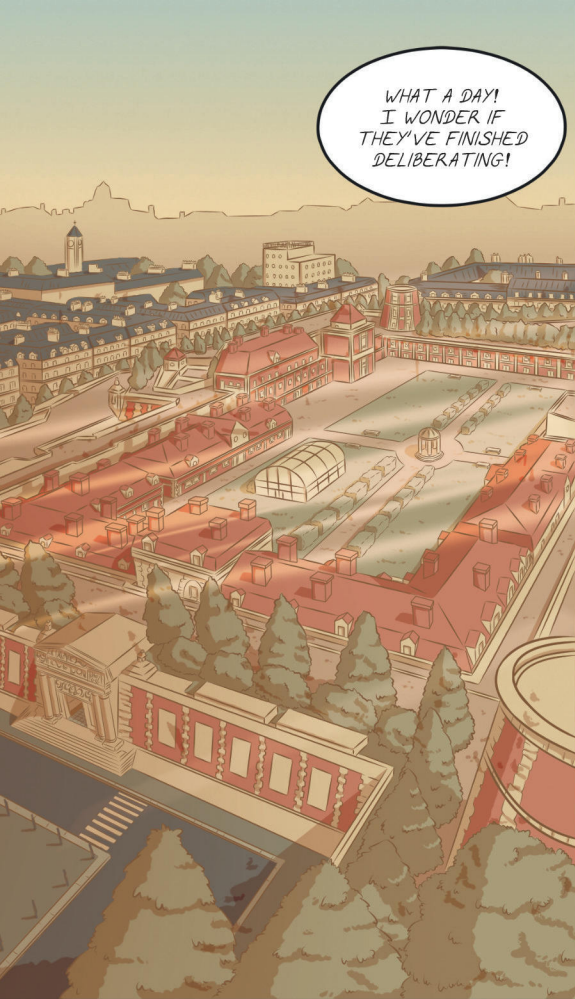




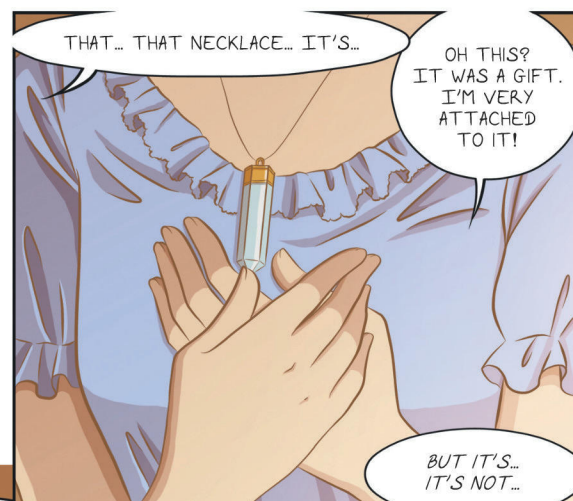
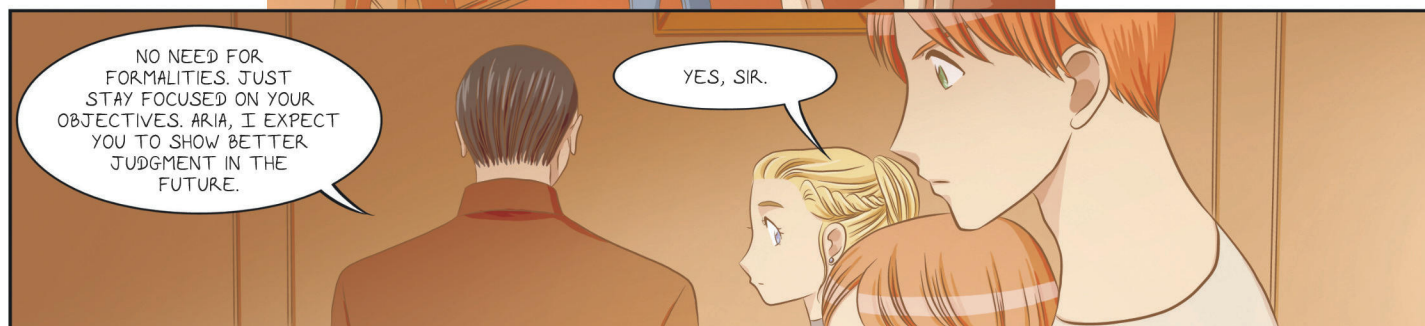
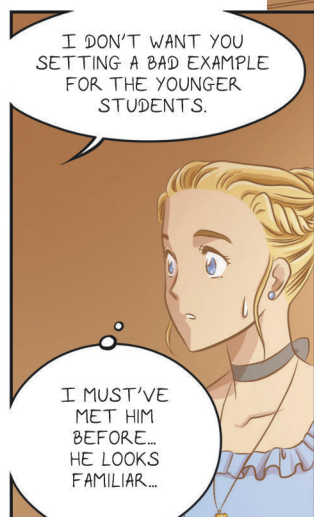




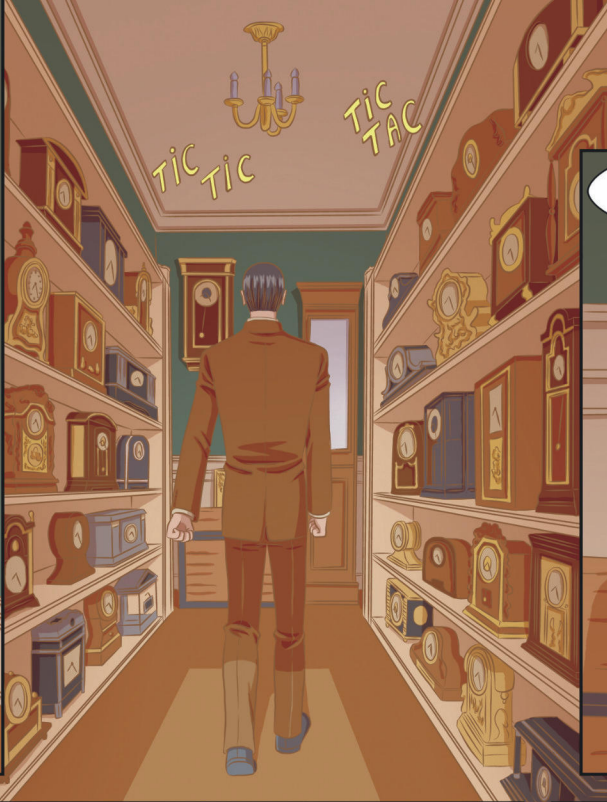




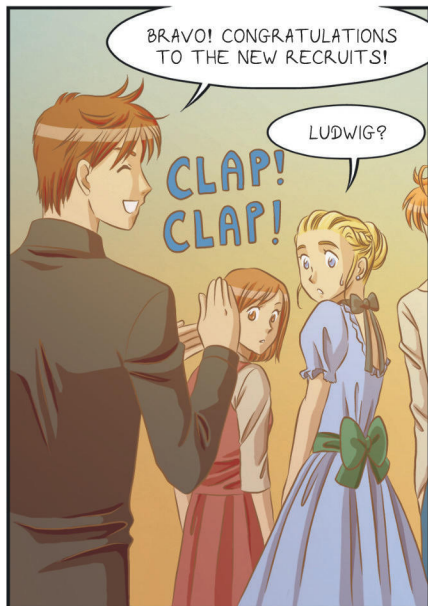
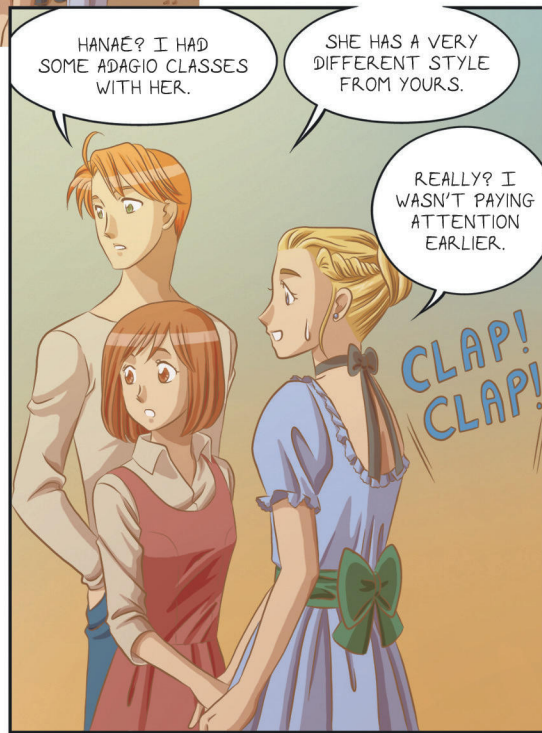
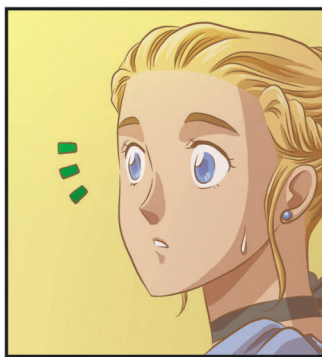
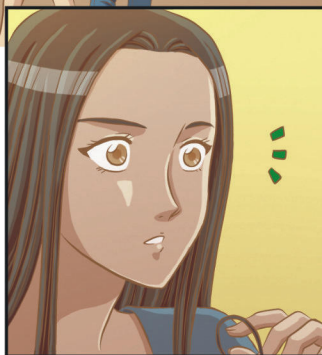
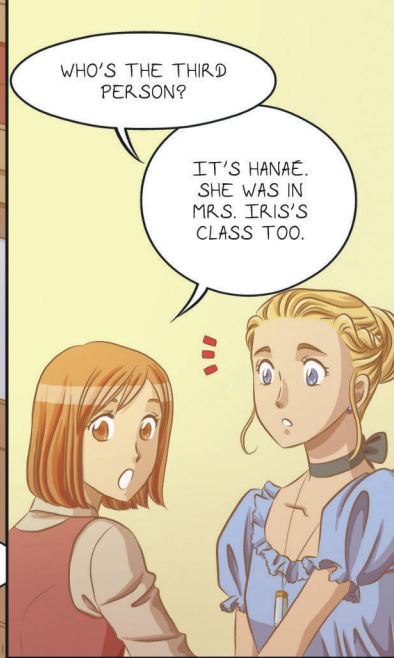
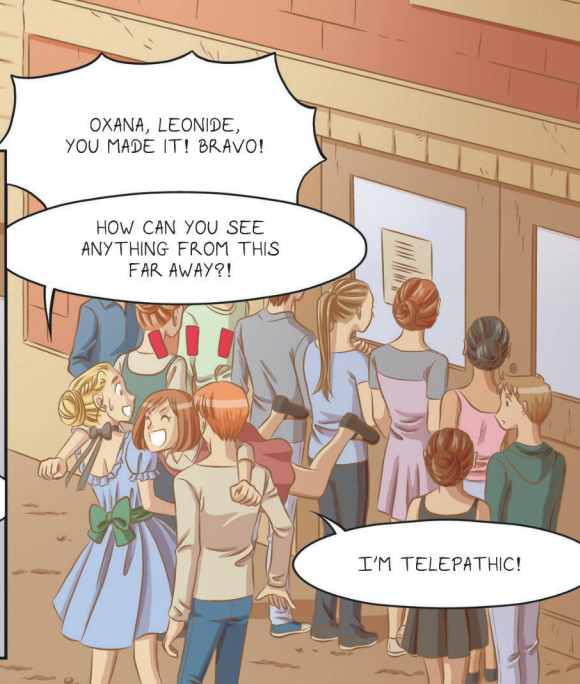














WHAT?! YOU...  
YOU'RE ALL PART  
OF THE SAME  
FAMILY?!

OH YES! DIDN'T YOU  
TELL HER? ARE YOU ASHAMED  
OF US, LEONIDE?

OF YOU?  
DEFINITELY!

SO, IS  
EVERYONE IN  
THE FAMILY AN  
ARTIST?!

YEAH, EXCEPT  
I DON'T DANCE. I'M  
GONNA BE A VIOLINIST IN  
THE ORCHESTRA! AND  
SOONER OR LATER THE  
SOLOIST SEAT IS BOUND  
TO BE MINE!

IS IT TRUE  
THAT SOMETIMES  
YOU PRACTICE UNTIL  
LATE AT NIGHT?

HA, HA!  
I SEE MY  
REPUTATION  
PRECEDES  
ME!

I THINK I'VE  
HEARD YOU PLAYING  
BEFORE!

REALLY?  
HA, HA!

THE NIGHT  
THE MAN IN WHITE  
WOKE ME UP, THAT  
MUST'VE BEEN  
LUDWIG!

ANYONE  
WHO PLAYS THAT  
WELL CAN'T BE A  
BAD PERSON!



NOW I SEE WHY LEONIDE  
SEEMED SO RESERVED WITH  
HIS GRANDFATHER...

OXANA, WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING? YOU'RE NOT  
CONCENTRATING!

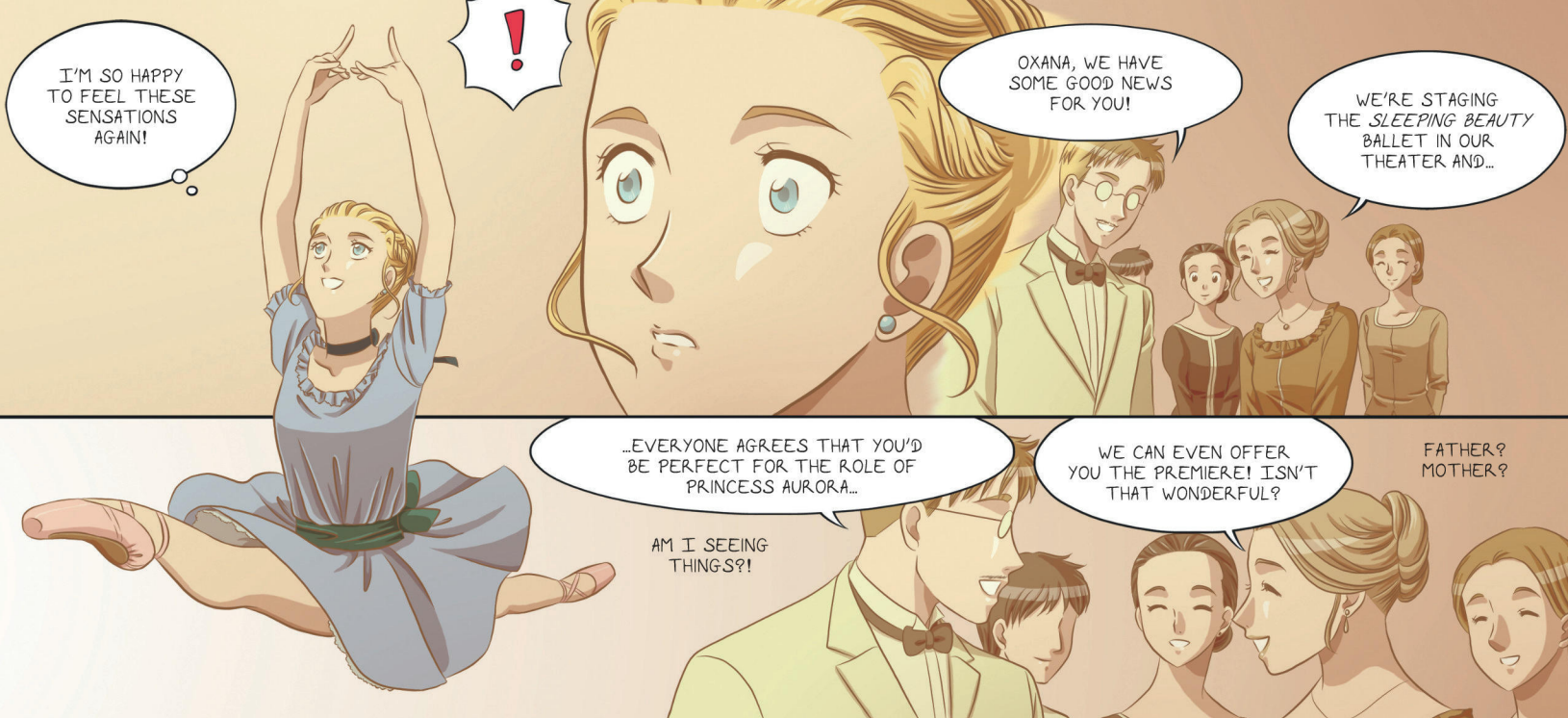
OH, SORRY!

AGAIN, AND THIS  
TIME DON'T FORGET  
TO SMILE!

SMILE? YES!  
DANCE IS HARD,  
BUT IT'S ALSO  
A PASSION!

HE USUALLY SMILES ALL  
THE TIME, BUT HIS RIVALRY  
WITH LUDWIG MUST NOT BE  
EASY FOR HIM!





I'M SO HAPPY TO FEEL THESE SENSATIONS AGAIN!



OXANA, WE HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS FOR YOU!

WE'RE STAGING THE *SLEEPING BEAUTY* BALLET IN OUR THEATER AND...

...EVERYONE AGREES THAT YOU'D BE PERFECT FOR THE ROLE OF PRINCESS AURORA...

WE CAN EVEN OFFER YOU THE PREMIERE! ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL?

FATHER? MOTHER?

AM I SEEING THINGS?!

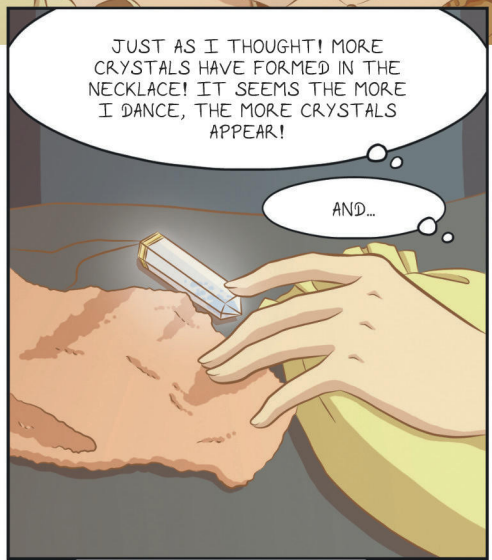


DID I HAVE A VISION? OR ARE THESE ACTUAL MEMORIES??

BAM!



IS IT JUST A COINCIDENCE?



JUST AS I THOUGHT! MORE CRYSTALS HAVE FORMED IN THE NECKLACE! IT SEEMS THE MORE I DANCE, THE MORE CRYSTALS APPEAR!

AND...



...THE MORE I DANCE, THE MORE I REMEMBER! MAYBE I'LL FIND OUT WHAT BECAME OF MY FAMILY AND WHY I WOKE UP IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT TIME.



THANK YOU, MRS. IRIS! I'LL DO MY BEST DURING OUR NEXT SESSIONS! HAVE A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY!

DON'T FORGET TO WORK ON YOUR LOWER LEG.

I'LL WALK OXANA TO HER BUILDING. SEE YOU LATER!

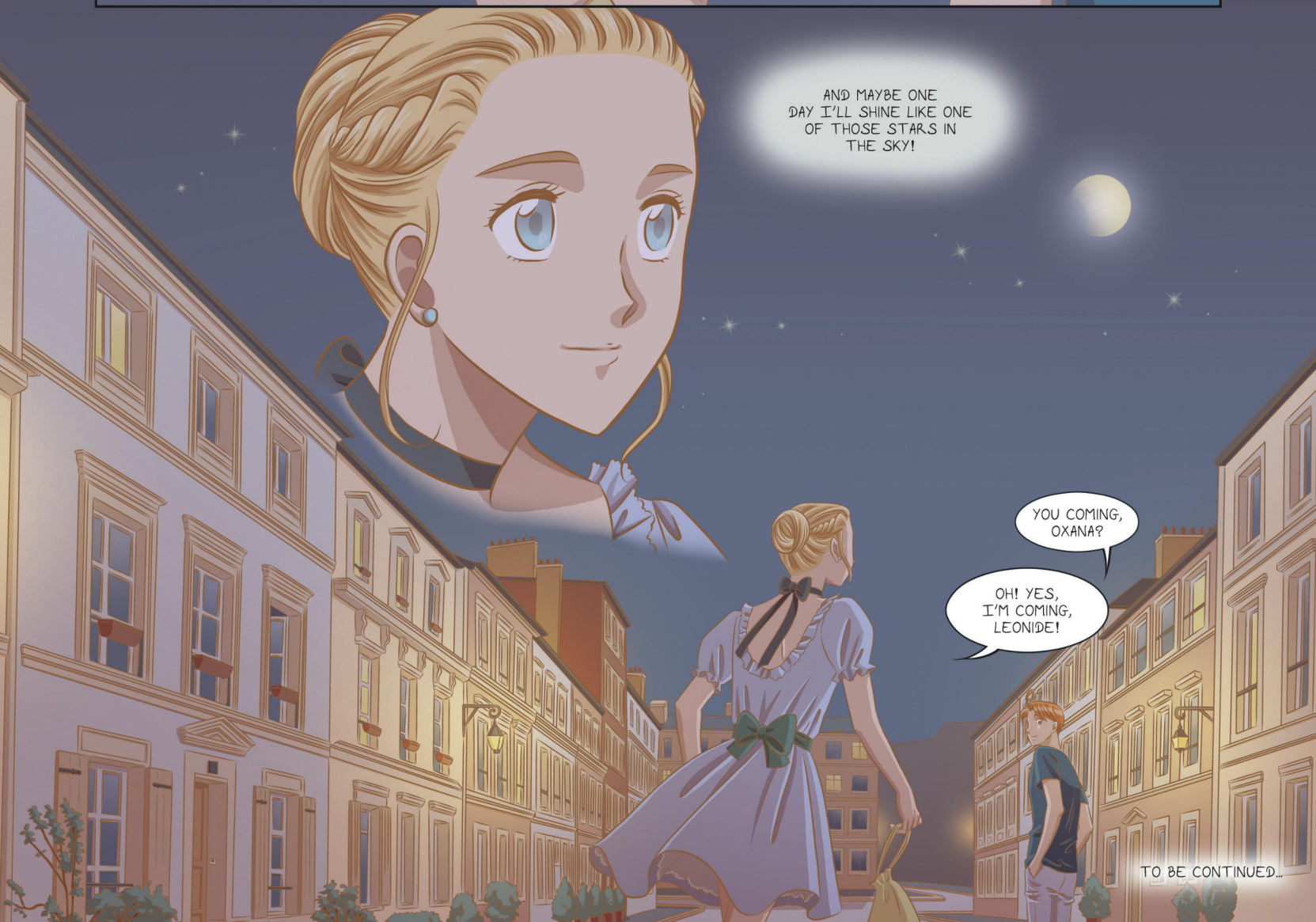
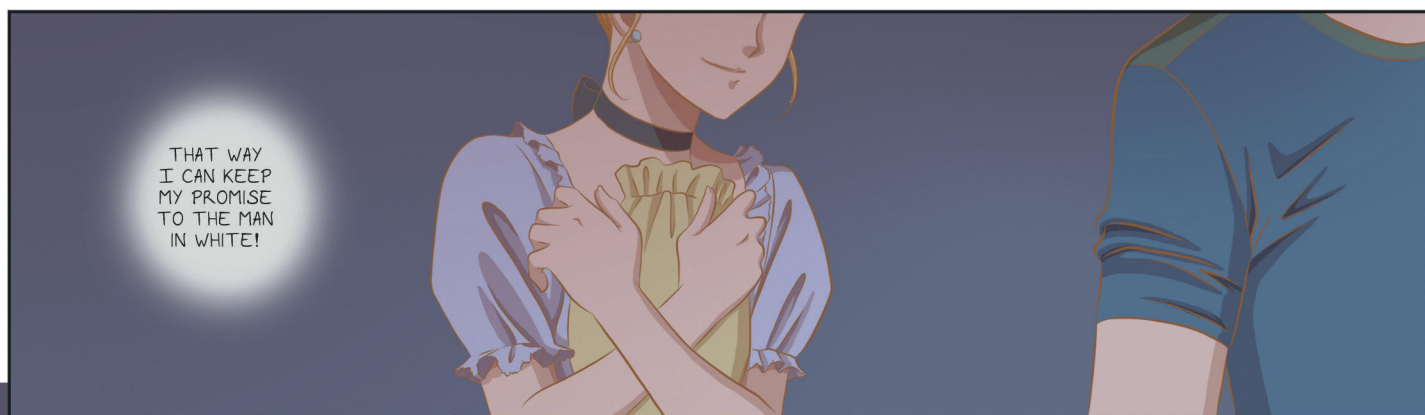
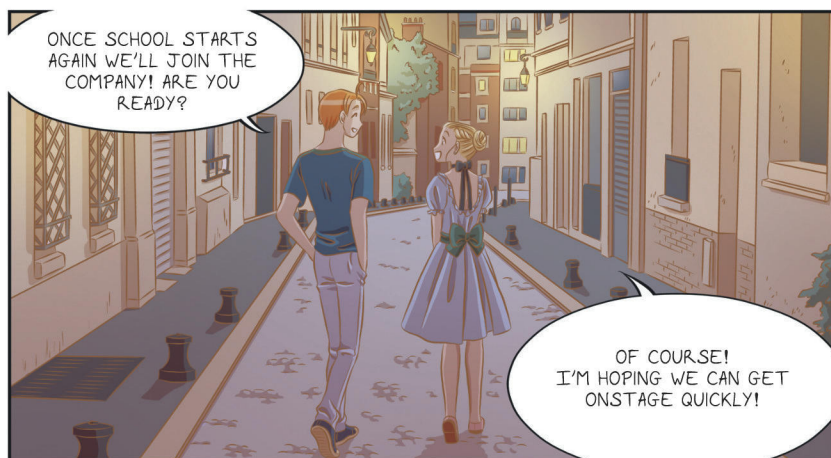
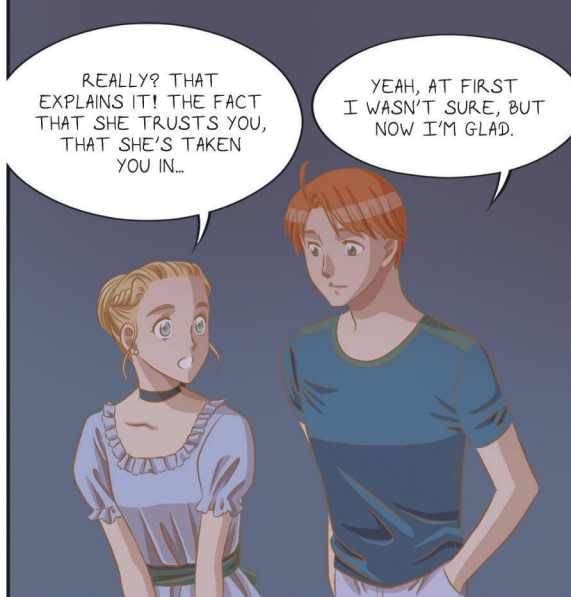


MRS. IRIS TERRIFIED ME DURING OUR FIRST FEW CLASSES... SHE'S A REAL AUTHORITARIAN.

BUT IT'S GOOD YOU MOVED IN WITH HER, LEONIDE. DO YOU KNOW HER WELL?

I WENT TO HER HOUSE A LOT WHEN I WAS LITTLE. MRS. IRIS IS MY GODMOTHER.











For Dad: I think about you every day.  
And for my entire supportive family.

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*Oxana, a young dancer from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,  
is the victim of a terrible curse that plunges her into a deep slumber...*

*She awakens a hundred years later with no memory of the past  
in a time that is not her own. Why has she lost her memory?*

*What power does her strange necklace hold?*

*And what are the intentions of the mysterious man  
in white who comes to her aid?*

